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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

ARISE, AWAKE, AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED



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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXV AUGUST 1970 No. 8

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

1. Question: (asked by a Brahmo devotee)

'Sir, why are there so many different opinions about the nature of God? Some say that God has form, while others say that He is formless. Again, those who speak of God with form tell us about His different forms. Why all this controversy?'

Answer: 'A devotee thinks of God as he sees Him. In reality there is no confusion about God. God explains all this to the devotee if the devotee only realizes Him somehow. You haven't set your foot in that direction. How can you expect to know all about God?

'Listen to a story. Once a man entered a wood and saw a small animal on a tree. He came back and told another man that he had seen a creature of a beautiful red colour on a certain tree. The second man replied: "When I went into the wood, I also saw that animal. But why do you call it red? It is green." Another man who was present contradicted them both and insisted that it was yellow. Presently others arrived and contended that it was grey, violet, blue, and so forth and so on. At last they started quarrelling among themselves. To settle the dispute they all went to the tree. They saw a man sitting under it. On being asked, he replied: "Yes, I live under this tree and I know the animal very well. All your descriptions are true. Sometimes it appears red, sometimes yellow, and at other times blue, violet, grey, and so forth. It is a chameleon. And sometimes it has no colour at all. Now it has a colour, and now it has none."

'In like manner, one who constantly thinks of God can know His real nature; he also knows that God reveals Himself to seekers in various forms and aspects. God has attributes; then again He has none. Only the man who lives under the tree knows that the chameleon can appear in various colours, and he knows, further, that the animal at times has no colour at all. It is the others who suffer from the agony of futile argument.

'Kabir used to say, "The formless Absolute is my Father, and God with form is my Mother."

'God reveals Himself in the form which His devotee loves most. His love for the devotee knows no bounds. It is written in the Purana that God assumed the form of Rama for His heroic devotee, Hanuman.

'The forms and aspects of God disappear when one discriminates in accordance with the Vedanta philosophy. The ultimate conclusion of such discrimination is that Brahman alone is real and this world of names and forms illusory. It is possible for a man to see the forms of God, or to think of Him as a Person, only so long as he is conscious that he is a devotee. From the standpoint of discrimination this "ego of a devotee" keeps him a little away from God.

'Do you know why images of Krishna or Kali are three and a half cubits high? Because of distance. Again, on account of distance the sun appears to be small. But if you go near it you will find the sun so big that you won't be able to comprehend it. Why have images of Krishna and Kali a dark-blue colour? That too is on account of distance, like the water of a lake, which appears green, blue, or black from a distance. Go near, take the water in the palm of your hand, and you will find that it has no colour. The sky also appears blue from a distance. Go near and you will see that it has no colour at all.

'Therefore I say that in the light of Vedantic reasoning Brahman has no attributes. The real nature of Brahman cannot be described. But so long as your individuality is real, the world also is real, and equally real are the different forms of God and the feeling that God is a Person.'

2. Question : (asked by Marwari devotee) 'Sir, what is the meaning of the worship of the Personal God? And what is the meaning of God without form or attribute?'

Answer : 'As you recall your father by his photograph, so likewise the worship of the image reveals in a flash the nature of Reality.

'Do you know what God with form is like? Like bubbles rising on an expanse of water, various divine forms are seen to rise out of the Great Akasa of Consciousness. The Incarnation of God is one of these forms. The Primal Energy sports, as it were, through the activities of a Divine Incarnation.

'What is there in mere scholarship? God can be attained by crying to Him with a longing heart. There is no need to know many things.

'He who is an acharya has to know different things. One needs a sword and shield to kill others; but to kill oneself, a needle or a nailknife suffices.

'One ultimately discovers God by trying to know who this "I" is. Is this "I" the flesh, the bones, the blood, or the marrow? Is it the mind or the buddhi? Analysing thus, you realize at last that you are none of these. This is called the process of "Neti, neti", "Not this, not this". One can neither comprehend nor touch the Atman. It is without qualities or attributes.

'But according to the path of devotion, God has attributes. To a devotee Krishna is Spirit. His Abode is Spirit, and everything about Him is Spirit.'

TOWARDS THE MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE

EDITORIAL

The seventy-fifth year of *Prabuddha Bharata* makes a momentous milestone in its onward march and noble task of having proclaimed truth to all the corners of the earth through the various vicissitudes of history. During the three-quarters of a century of its life, the world was convulsed by mighty revolutions and reversals, complex stresses and strains, tormenting trials and tensions, let alone two world wars ; the dark spells nevertheless alternated with the flashes of creative endeavours and unprecedented progress in some spheres of human thought and activity. The overall picture, however, could scarcely be said to be one of robust optimism, bold vision or quiet secure existence. All through this critical period barring a brief break, the Journal has stuck to its post as a sentinel undeterred by storm and stress, ever remaining true to its masters—the Prophets and Incarnations, the sages and seers, of all climes and times —and faithful to the guidelines given by Swami Vivekananda who commissioned it seventy-five years ago.

It has since taken delight in dauntlessly disseminating in the idiom of the day the message of their experiences and realizations, the message enshrined in the scriptures of the world, the message which awakens in man the consciousness of his divine dimension, the message which infuses hope in the lowly and the lost, strength in the weak and the forsaken, fearlessness in the coward, life and light in the joyless mortal. It draws our attention to the everlasting glory of the Ātman, the common factor behind man, beast and inanimate objects, behind the universe, visible and invisible, and points It out in telling terms as the ultimate solution to our bewildering problems and withal as an abiding basis of our social and political, national and international structures. For the very survival and renewal of *Homo sapiens,* there is a greater and more imperative need for the wide diffusion of this message than ever before.

This message therefore forms the burden of the song the Journal has been singing in sweet cadence in tune with the serenity and sublimity of the snow-capped Himalayas and thence has been sending forth to the world abroad to soothe the fever and frenzy, the inevitable offshoots of modern life. The Himalayan Ashrama which houses it is dedicated to pure Advaita towering high above and totally free from all trace of forms and formalities, ceremonials and symbols, superstitions and myths, weaknesses and leanings. From such a rarefied environment, *Prabuddha Bharata* sends out its greetings to one and all, and makes a fervent plea to each one of us to be pure and make others pure, to realize God and help others do so. For, as Swami Vivekananda avers, 'Neither numbers nor powers nor wealth nor learning nor eloquence nor anything else will prevail, but *purity, living the life,* in one word, *anubhūti,* realization.'[1] 'Hold we on to realization, to being Brahman, to becoming Brahman.'[2]

UNITY OF REALITY

Brahman is the grand goal which everyone consciously or unconsciously struggles to reach. It penetrates and pervades the whole universe, It is its substratum and subsistence. It is the crucible which fuses

1 Swami Vivekananda : *The Complete Works,* Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14. Vol. VIII, 1959, p. 348.

2 Ibid. p. 349.

and melts down all diversities and multiplicities in nature. It is the rationale of the concepts of unity and universality. Unity, the finding of unity, engaged the attention of the ancient Vedantins. Their explorations ended, crowned with success, when they discovered the identity of Jīva with Brahman and boldly proclaimed Brahman as One without a second. It was, however. in the spiritual sphere that oneness was revealed.

Today a similar move towards unity is discernible in certain fields, specially science. The great variety of objects we perceive is reduced to mere energy by the discovery of science. Scientific thought when extended to its utmost limit transcends itself and lands us in the region of trans-empirical unity, a unity that accounts for the world of matter and force in their multitudinous forms, massive as well microscopic. Even in the field of politics one can observe the trend to unity. There is an increasing awareness on the part of enlightened politicians of the need to build up a world polity and bring into being world citizenship. Nations are fused together by the interconnectedness of world economy. At the social level, attempts are afoot to annul exclusiveness based on caste, class and race, and cement mankind with common bonds. The establishment of an egalitarian society is a cherished object of our age. Present-day rapid communication conduces to the feeling of the natural kinship of human beings and the realization of the oneness of mankind even on material level.

Attraction of Advaita

Thus the concept of unity is sweeping the world : it is capturing the interest of the intelligentsia. This explains the growing 'fascination' of modern thinkers for Advaita Vedanta. By winning the hearts of the present generation of different shades of thought and diverse faiths, Advaita has become the solace of life and hope of the age. If the present is the precursor of the future, one can foresee Advaita as the prospective philosophy and religion of those who seek unity amidst diversity. There is every reason for its occupying a preeminent place. As a philosophy it is highly rational and simply superb ; strictly scientific is its approach to truth. In the realm of religion it represents the summit of spiritual aspirations and realizations. If the Upaniṣads are considered 'the Himalayas of the Soul', Advaita is the Mount Everest of those Himalayas. Rightly did Swami Vivekananda declare it to be, 'the fairest flower of philosophy and religion that any country in any age has produced, where human thought attains its highest expression and even goes beyond the mystery which seems to be impenetrable.'[3] Coming to ethics which teaches one to cultivate the feeling of brotherhood or of the oneness of mankind in inter-personal relationships, when one is at a loss to find the basis of ethics, it is the Advaitic concept of the oneness of all beings that is seen as the rationale of ethics and morality.

Universal Need of Advaita

Even from the practical standpoint, Advaita endows man with strength and fearlessness so much needed to carry on his duties and face problems in the trying situations of modern life. Again, it is Advaita which liberates man from superstition and ignorance, from helplessness and dependence. The words of Swami Vivekananda with reference to the Indian situation obtaining in his day may be quoted with profit :

> 'This softness has been with us (Indians) till we have become like masses of cotton, and are dead. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which

[3] Ibid, Vol. II, 1963, p. 247.

nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. This is what we want, and that can only be created, established, and strengthened by understanding and realizing the ideal of the Advaita, that ideal of the oneness of all.'[4]

'The salvation of Europe', he said in a lecture delivered in London in 1896, 'depends on a rationalistic religion, and Advaita—the non-duality, the Oneness, the idea of the Impersonal God—is the only religion that can have any hold on any intellectual people. It comes whenever religion seems to disappear and irreligion seems to prevail, and that is why it has taken ground in Europe and America.'[5]

In a letter to an English friend he wrote :

'I quite agree with you that only the Advaita philosophy can save mankind, whether in East or West, from "devil worship" and kindred superstitions, giving tone and strength to the very nature of man. India herself requires this, quite as much or even more than the West.'[6]

The importance he attaches to Advaita is evident in his speeches and writings urging us to practise and propagate it 'for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many'. This insight of the Swami may be traced to the teaching of his great Master Sri Ramakrishna, that we should keep the knowledge of Advaita in our pocket. And it is a privilege for *Prabuddha Bharata* to follow in their footprints and stress its significance and relevance to the modern time. For there is nothing like Advaita for giving a man strength, infinite strength—physical, mental, moral and spiritual—and confidence, immense self-confidence, and for cutting at the root of all delusion instantaneously.

Efficacy of Religions

Let this not lead, or rather mislead, one to conclude that the Journal ignores other schools of Vedanta viz. dualism and qualified monism. Nothing is further from the truth. For in the face of the irrefutable evidence of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences it cannot but admit and disseminate the efficacy of not only these Vedantic paths but also of other faiths in taking a man to truth. As a corollary it calls our attention to the basic harmony or unity of religions, eroding the attitude of exclusiveness and bigotry. Men are in different stages of evolution. It is therefore natural that everyone chooses what suits him according to his temperament and ideas and thereby works out his liberation. Every religion has its saving power ; the main thing, the goal, of all religions is spiritual realization or freedom. What differs is the approach or the method. The paths to reach the goal are bound to vary in accordance with racial, social and geographical conditions as well as individual capacities. All are, however, wending their way to one destination.

Spiritual Practice

In a nutshell Swami Vivekananda puts the cardinal principles and means of religion in his introduction to *Raja-Yoga* :

'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'[7]

The comprehensiveness of this quotation

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4 Ibid. Vol. III, 1960, p. 190.

5 Ibid. Vol. II, 1963, p. 139.

6 Ibid. Vol, VIII, 1959, p. 335.

7 Ibid. Vol. I, 1962, p. 124.

on the essentials of spirituality has no parallel. It presents a clear picture of what religion means. Doctrines etc. are the superficialities or shell of religion. The core or kernel thereof is divinity, or rather manifesting the divine. A man is religious to the extent he does this and becomes free.

What are the means to be employed for the purpose? Men may by and large be classified into four groups—active, emotional, meditative and rational—and there is a method for each of these. The active type converts activity itself into a means for spiritual realization by working selflessly or offering the fruits of all his actions to God. While working in the work-a-day world, a spiritual aspirant will not grumble against the work assigned to him and complain, 'Why do I waste my time in working instead of worshipping?' For, to him work is transformed into worship and his energies exercised in the discharge of his duties are bent to the spiritual goal. In the case of the second set of persons of emotional nature, all their love and emotion that are generally bestowed upon worldly objects are directed to the Personal God. They love and worship the Lord with all their heart and soul, without any thought of requital, without even the thought of self. Love of the Lord is the easiest and the most natural of disciplines. For the third type there is the method of conquering nature by mastering the mind, the internal world of man. It is a scientific method of concentrating the powers of the mind on itself, ridding oneself of nature's control and thus gaining freedom. In this discipline one has to guard oneself against the danger of being lured by psychic powers and going astray. The last group of persons throw the searchlight of rigorous reason on all entities including their own selves, apprehend their ephemerality and distinguish them from the eternal Self. By force of will they give up once for all, all that is non-self, shoot themselves into space, spiritual space, and realize themselves as the ever-free, ever-pure, ever-blissful Brahman. Common to all these disciplines is self-abnegation. The religions of the world may be looked upon as embodying and emphasizing one or more of these methods.

Strictly speaking, the four faculties do not inhere in different men, but in each man in different degrees or equally. So it is left to the individual to choose one or more or all of the methods mentioned. The means once chosen, what remains to be done is to bestow one's whole attention on the strengthening or perfecting of the same and this is of much importance to an aspirant. He may have read all the scriptures and attended services in the churches of the world, but without practice of the means he will find himself not substantially different from an atheist. For religion is not merely intellectual assent to scriptural statements, nor is it merely going to church and believing in a dogma or doctrine. What then is it? It is a bold, vigorous endeavour to free oneself from the shackles that bind one, a tough fight with the forces that thwart the manifestation of the divine, an intense struggle to come face to face with the Spirit, a deep yearning for realization. Now we come to know why so many, in spite of their claim to religion, make little progress in spiritual life. In fact they are not prepared to make the needed effort, being satisfied with the chimera of the world's joys. When the knowledge dawns upon them that they are after all slaves of nature, slaves to greed, lust and anger, slaves to name and fame, slaves to wealth and learning, slaves to ever-receding hope and happiness, then they understand where they stand and turn to the practice of religion. Proper practice of the means ends in realization.

It is contended that as Brahman alone always is the only reality and as It is not

something to be produced or attained, there is no need for realization, much less any discipline. Well, this holds good in the case of realized souls, for to them there is no reality but Brahman and their beaming countenance betrays the abiding bliss and peace contrasted with the passing peace and joy of the world. Their realization came after intense practice either in this life or before. And these Lights of the earth, the illumined souls, have to be distinguished from all others who are but children in spirituality. Evidently what applies to the former is inappropriate for the latter. Concerning the spiritual aspirant who is convinced of the reality of Brahman and feels the tightening grip of bondage and the evanescence of his experiences here, can he keep contented? Will he not struggle and struggle until he breaks free?

Mere argument that Brahman is ever existent is incapable of satisfying us: it does not quench our thirst, nor relieve us of our sorrows and ills. Therefore there is definite need for realization, for bringing Brahman into our consciousness, into the consciousness of the human race. This cannot be done by pious wishing, by mouthing scriptural quotations and showing off one's religiosity. What is required is steadfast *sādhanā,* practice of spiritual disciplines.

As we go on practising spiritual exercises, we get more and more strength, gain newer and newer insights and at last realize the Divine in our own consciousness as vividly as, but in an intenser degree than, we see the objects of this world. *Prabuddha Bharata* pays attention to the propagation of the means and goal of realization and bids all seekers of Truth Godspeed.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Dehra Dun
14.4.1914

Dear—

Today I have also received a letter from Revered Baburam Maharaj. He wrote that being taken ill, he could not go anywhere else and would soon return to the (Belur) Math. What has happened by the will of the Lord, has been all for the best.

I am sorry to learn that you have not been in quite a good health. You are undergoing treatment, but with no result—this is a matter of no small regret.

But do not desist from practising spiritual disciplines. The body may remain well or ill but let there be no mistake or negligence in invoking the Lord. For Sri Ramakrishna's teaching is: 'Let afflictions and the body know their affairs, O my mind, you stay in bliss.' Let there be no mistake in remembering the Lord who is the embodiment of bliss.

He who thinks: let the body be cured and then I shall remember the Lord, will never more call on Him. Vyāsadeva says:

य इच्छति हरिं स्मर्त्तुं व्यापारान्तगतैरपि ।
समुद्रे शान्तकल्लोले स्नातुमिच्छति दुर्मतिः ॥

The meaning of this is: He who thinks: let this trouble be over and then undisturbed I shall practise remembrance of God—his plight is like that of the man who says standing on the sea shore: let the waves subside and then I shall bathe. The waves

will never subside in the sea. And so how can he bathe? He alone will have his bath finished who is able to take his plunge when the waves continue rolling. Likewise, he alone will have his adoration of God done who is able to carry on his devotional practices in the midst of happiness and misery, disease and bereavement, afflictions and poverty etc. On the contrary, he who says: let the opportunity come first and then I shall worship God, he is no more going to worship God, for perfect opportunity ever falls to the lot of a very few in life. Disease, bereavement, agonies and affliction are pretty inseparable from life. Only he who is able to worship God through all situations of life, however they may be, will succeed in his devotions. Otherwise it is extremely difficult to make any headway in spiritual life.

The condition of my body continues to be as before, but for the fact that meanwhile I was feeling exceedingly weak. That weakness is now being felt a little less—that is all. Everybody is telling that the body has become greatly emaciated. The climate of this place seems to be rather good, particularly with no heat being felt at all. This is indeed a great gain.

Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) has sent from Kasi a Brahmacharin to live with me. In a letter he has also asked me to rent a small house at Dehra Dun for passing the summer months here. And I have not to worry for the expenses for he himself will bear them all. He has indeed great affection and love for me. But even now I cannot tell with certainty how this will be done. As the Lord wills, so it will be.

The person with whom I have been staying here distributes homoeopathy medicine to many. On his request I have been taking his medicine for the last five or six days. The Lord only knows what benefit is accruing out of that. I do not understand. However, I shall try the medicine for a few days more.

I shall remain concerned about your health. My prayer to the Lord is that you may remain engaged in spiritual practices and in sound health. To be sure, He being the embodiment of auspiciousness, has always been dispensing what is good for us. We may or may not understand this—but He may make this faith firm: this is my earnest prayer to Him.

With my best wishes,

Sri Turiyananda

Enough of prosperity, desires, and pious deeds. The mind did not find repose in these in the dreary forest of the world.

—Astavakra Samhita (X. 7)

From

Prabuddha Bharata

75 Years Ago

WHAT IS DUTY?

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

It is necessary to know what work is, and with that comes, naturally, the question, what is Duty? If I have to do some thing, I must first know my duty and that I can do it. The idea of duty again, is so different in different nations. The Mohammedan says, what is written in his book, the Koran, is his duty; the Hindu says, what is in his book, the Vedas, is duty and the Christian says what is in his Bible is his duty. So we find that there must be varied ideas of duty differing according to different states in life, different periods and different nations. The term 'duty', like every other universal abstract term, is impossible to define; we can only get an idea of it by describing the surroundings and by knowing its actions and its results. To make an objective definition of duty would be entirely impossible; there is no such thing as objective duty. Yet there is duty from the subjective side; any action that makes us go godward is a good action and is our duty; and any action that makes us go downward is an evil action. There is only one idea which is universal for all mankind, of any age or sect or country, and that has been summed up in Sanskrit aphorism: 'Do not injure any being; non-injuring any being is virtue; injuring any being is vice.'

One point we ought to remember is, that we should always try to see the duty of others through their own eyes, and never wish to judge the customs of other races or other peoples by our own standard. 'I am not the standard of the universe.' This is the great lesson to learn. 'I have to accommodate myself to the world, and not the world to me.' Therefore we see that environments will change our duties, and doing in the best way, that duty which is ours at a certain time, is the best thing we can do in this world....

Let us do that duty which is ours by birth, and when we have done that, do the duty which is ours by our position. Each man is placed in some position in life, and must do the duties of that position first. There is one great danger in human nature, that man never looks at himself. He thinks he is quite as fit to be on the throne as the king. Even if he is, he must first show that he has done the duty of his own position, and when he has done that, higher duty will come to him.

The only way to rise is by doing the duty that is in our hands now, and making ourselves stronger and going higher, until we reach the highest state. Nor is duty to be slighted. A man who does the lower work is not, therefore, a lower man than he who does the higher work; a man should not be judged by the nature of his duties but by the manner in which he does them. His manner of doing them and power to do them is the test of a man. A shoemaker who can turn out a strong, nice pair of shoes in the shortest time is a better man, according to his works, than a professor who talks non-sense every day of his life.

Later on we will find, that even the idea of duty will have to be changed, and that the greatest work is only done where there is the least motive urging us from behind. Yet it is work through duty, that leads us to work without any idea of duty; when, work will become worship—nay, higher, work will stand alone for its own sake. But that is the ideal, and the way lies through duty. We shall find the philosophy be-

hind all duties, either in the form of ethics or love, is the same as that in every other Yoga—attenuating the lower self, so that the real self may shine ; to circumscribe the frittering away of energies on the lower planes of existence, so that the soul may manifest itself on the higher planes. This is accomplished by the continuous denial of low desires, which, duty rigorously requires. The whole organisation of Society has thus been developed, consciously or unconsciously, as the land of actions, the field of experience, where, by limiting the desires of selfishness, we open the way to an unlimited expansion of the real nature of man.

There is a sage in India, a great Yogi, one of the most wonderful men I have seen in my life. He is a peculiar man ; he will not teach any one ; if you ask him a question he will not answer. It is too much for him to take the position of a teacher ; he will not take it. If you ask a question, and if you wait for some days, in the course of conversation, he will bring the subject out himself, and wonderful light he will throw on it. He told me once the secret of work, and what he said was, 'Let the end and the means be joined into one, and that is the secret of work.' When you are doing work, do not think of anything beyond. Do it as worship, and the highest worship, and devote your whole life to it for the time being. Thus, in the story the butcher and the woman[1], did their duty with cheerfulness, and whole-heartedness, and willingness, and the result was that they became illuminated, clearly showing that the right performance of the duties of any station, and being unattached, lead to the highest.

(Reproduced from August, 1896)

[1] Reference here is to the story occuring in the *Mahābhārata*, Vana Parvan, Chapters 170+0 178.

HOW IS A MAN REBORN?

SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

8. HEREDITARY TRANSMISSION OF MENTAL CHARCTERISTICS IS NOT POSSIBLE. NEITHER HEREDITY NOR ENVIRONMENT, BUT THE CHILD'S INNER NATURE, IS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT.

A distinctive characteristic of the mind is that it can transmit consciousness, which is intrinsic in the self. The radiance of consciousness reaches the body through the mind and not vice versa. When the mind is diverted from the physical body the body loses sensation, none of the ten bodily organs, either of perception or of action, can function, but the mind continues to operate. In dream state the body is almost inert, yet the mind intensely functions. The bodily functions and the mental functions are altogether different. One can intensely think, feel, will, imagine, recollect, when the body and the organs are inoperative. Unlike the bodily processes, mental functions give clear evidence of underlying consciousness. The mind cannot be disintegrated in the same way as matter. No chemical analysis of the mind is possible. The mind can go anywhere but not the body.

The body and the mind being characteristically different, the bodily traits belong to the body and the mental traits to the mind.

So the hereditary transmission of the mental traits through the particles of the body of either parent is not possible. 'The inheritance of mental ability or intelligence is one of the most important, yet one of the most difficult, problems of human genetics', remarks Claude Villee.[25]

However, according to modern biology the mental as well as the physical traits of the parents are inherited by the offspring. How? 'The living substance of the sperm and egg nuclei transmits all the characters which the new individual inherits from his parents. The qualities themselves—colour, size, shape, and so forth—are not present in the germ cells, but something representing them and capable of producing them in the new individual is present. In man, the colour of hair, eyes, and skin, the size and shape of the body and its parts, certain structural defects, resistance to various diseases, certain mental traits, capacities and defects are all inherited and therefore must be represented in the gametes. The latter, then, contain factors which interact with each other and with the environment to produce the adult characteristics.'

Biology ackowledges two determining factors in the development of an individual—heredity and environment. Of these two heredity is basic. The functioning of environment is dependent on heredity, that is, the individual's physical and mental constitution acquired from the parents. So says Conklin:

> 'Unquestionably the factors or causes of development are to be found not merely in the germ but also in the environment, not only in intrinsic but also in extrinsic forces; but it is equally certain that the directing and guiding factors of development are in the main intrinsic, and are present in the organization of the germ cells, while the environmental factors exercise chiefly a stimulation, inhibiting or modifying influence on development.'[26]

As observed by Claude Villee:

> 'At one time a bitter argument raged as to whether heredity or environment was more important in determining human traits. It is now abundantly clear that both physical and mental traits are the result of the interplay of both genetic and environmental factors.'[27]

According to the doctrine of reincarnation an individual acquires from the parents what physical traits are merited by him in consequence of his karma. But he does not owe his mental characteristics to the parents in the same way. He brings his own mind with him. As we have noted, hereditary transmission of mental traits is not possible. Mental characteristics of the parents cannot pass on to the offspring through the physical particles. Whatever similarity there may be between the mental characters of an individual and those of his parents must be due to the fact that like attracts like under the law of karma.

An individual's inborn nature, physical as well as mental, is mainly responsible for his development. The environmental conditions can only stimulate or retard his growth. There is no question that man is deeply influenced by the surroundings in which he lives. Generally, his development is the resultant of the interaction of his inner nature and outer conditions. But his inner nature is the prevailing force. By no means can man be counted as a creature of circumstances. Very often he chooses his environment according to his inner tendencies and capabilities. He can modify the environmental conditions, use them to his best advantage and can even rise above them. He

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25 Claude A. Villee: *Biology*, pp. 503-4,

26 Edwin Grant Conklin: *Heredity and Environment in the Development of Men*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1919, pp. 59-60.

27 Claude A. Villee: *Biology*, p. 506.

can even develop the power to create his own environment.

A man of self-knowledge is unperturbed by the changing conditions of life. So says Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

> 'He whose mind is unworried in the midst of sufferings, who is free from desire in the midst of pleasures, who is devoid of attachment, fear and anger—such a person of steady wisdom is said to be a sage.' [28]

9. THE FERTILIZED EGG DEVELOPS INTO A FULL-FLEDGED HUMAN BEING BECAUSE THE SAME IS IN IT. WHERE DOES HE COME FROM? NOT FROM THE PARENTS. IT IS THE PSYCHOPHYSICAL CONSTITUTION THAT EVOLVES AND NOT THE REAL SELF.

According to modern genetics the very first stage of an individual's existence is the fertilized egg or zygote, the single cell formed by the fusion of the nuclei of sperm and ovum. This is what develops into an adult in due course. 'At fertilization a sperm and an egg come together and unite, the nucleus of one fusing completely with that of the other. The single cell resulting from this union begins to divide, forming a group of cells, which develop into an embryo and finally into an adult organism.' The single cell that develops into a full-fledged human individual is a minute but potent biophysical unit as conceived by the geneticists. It is too small to be perceived by the unaided eye and is open only to microscopic observation. But its potency is amazing. As observed by the geneticists: 'Indeed, the nuclei of egg and sperm, these tiny packets of reproductive substance into which so much is packed and out of which so much emerges, are the most remarkable bits of living matter in existence.' [29]

But the fertilized egg that grows to be an adult person cannot be regarded merely as a material unit endowed with livingness. What develops into a human individual must have the same latent in it. According to Vedanta development means unfoldment of inherent potency. What lies latent in the cause becomes manifest as the effect. A fig seed is a fig tree in the potential state. A fig seed develops into a fig tree and a poppy seed into a poppy plant; it is because the fig tree exists in the fig seed and the poppy plant in the poppy seed as potencies. Only by studying the fig tree can we know the real nature of the fig seed. No chemical analysis of the seed will reveal its true nature to us. No microscopic observation can probe into its potency. Similarly, by studying the poppy plant we can know the poppy seed in the true sense and in no other way. Therefore, in order to know the true nature of the fertilized egg we have to know its developed state as man. Truly speaking, it is a miniature man. All the main factors of human personality—the body, the organs, the vital principle, the mind, and the self—must be there in potential states.

Involution precedes evolution. The evolvement of the seed into a tree is due to the fact that the tree is involved in the seed. The evolution is truly speaking the unfoldment of what is infolded. Without the recognition of involution evolution is inexplicable. The differences in the seeds account for the differences in the trees of the same species. As is the cause so is the effect. Something cannot come out of nothing. The cause of the variation of each individual is in its very nature. Neither environmental conditions, nor heredity, far less chance, can account for the new departure of every individual in the course of its development. Each develops according to its own pattern. The secret of its development is its innate creativeness. The fertilized egg develops into a human individual because the same is involved

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28 BG II. 56.

29 *Principles of Genetics*, p. 17.

there. Modern evolutionists ignore involution; consequently they have had recourse to 'chance variations' or 'sporadic changes' in accounting for the individual evolutionary process.

To quote Swami Vivekananda:

> 'No rational man can possibly quarrel with these evolutionists. But we have to learn one thing more. We have to go one step further, and what is that? That every evolution is preceded by an involution. The seed is the father of the tree, but another tree was itself the father of the seed. The seed is the fine form out of which the big tree comes and another big tree was the form which is involved in that seed. The whole of this universe was present in the cosmic fine universe. The little cell, which becomes afterward the man, was simply the involved man, and becomes evolved as a man. If this is clear, we have no quarrel with the evolutionists, for we see that if they admit this step, instead of their destroying religion, they will be the greatest supporters of it.'[30]

The central principle in human personality is the luminous self, the knower within, whose radiance sustains the psychophysical constitution and becomes manifest through it. There is neither evolution nor involution, neither expansion nor contraction, neither growth nor decay, in the ever-shining changeless self. All these variations characterize the psychophysical constitution alone. Consequent on its varied modifications there is diverse manifestation of the luminous self. Just as the same sunlight appears different through different transmitters—as dim or bright, as yellow or red, as blue or green, similarly according to the development of the psychophysical system, the radiance of consciousness belonging to the self (*ātma-caitanya-jyoti*) becomes manifest variously—as more or less intelligence, as more or less strength, as more or less joy, and so forth.[31]

In the fertilized egg an individual's psychophysical constitution is in the nascent state. His mind as well as the body, minute though they may be, have just begun to develop with the concomitant manifestation of the self, howsoever faint it may be. Livingness is ever attended with consciousness. Any expression of consciousness or sentiency in a living thing must be due to the manifestation of the self through the mind. As we have noted, it is through the mind that the radiance of consciousness reaches the physical level. Where do the mind and self of the individual come from? Neither of the two can be inherited from the parents. Both are impartible. Nor can they derive from the physical elements transmitted by the parents, as we have explained. From this it follows that the real source of the human offspring is not the fertilized egg, that is to say, he does not originate from the male parent or from the female parent or from both. He must come from elsewhere.

10. How is an individual born?

Truly speaking, it is the case of rebirth of one of the many individuals who died somewhere sometime back. Death is not the end of an individual nor is birth the beginning of him. There is no place for accidentalism in human life, which is meaningful. In order to find how a man is reborn we have to find how he dies. At death, the self, the real man, leaves the physical body, but retains the subtle and the causal body. The mind with all its contents belongs to the subtle body. According to those impressions of karma (i.e., volitional actions, experiences, and thoughts) that become prevalent in the mind of the dying man, a very fine physical ves-

30 Op. cit pp. 207-8.

31 Vide *Brahma-Sūtra*, Śaṅkara's Commentary, I. iii. 30.

ture for the subtle and the causal body is formed at the time of his departure from the gross body. This fine garb carries the potencies of the next gross body he assumes. He may go to a higher or a lower region impelled by the impressions of karma. But when these are exhausted the residual karma will lead him eventually to this human plane, where alone he has a chance for liberation. It is to be noted that unredeemed or unliberated souls are subject to rebirth and not the liberated.

When a bound soul is ready for rebirth on the human plane the impressions of his karma lead him to the parents from whom he can secure the materials for his gross body. The fine physical vesture that he wears has the potency to acquire the necessary material elements. Being associated with food he enters the body of the male parent suitable for his purpose. There he gets into the requisite sperm, which turns into a potent seed for his develompment as an individual. This is the seed that being united with the appropriate ovum in the female parent turns into the zygote and becomes ready for germination. These are the two specialized male and female reproductive cells that are responsible for the birth of the offspring out of countless sperm and ova that are brought into play in sexual reproduction, as already noted.

A tree may bear any number of fruits, yet they differ from one another in spite of their similarity due to common origin. Similarly, despite their resemblance every sperm differs from every other sperm in a male body. In the same way every ovum differs from every other ovum in a female body. Led by its karma the transmigrating soul gets into the requisite sperm and the ovum out of countless reproductive cells. The fusion of the sperm and the ovum required for its physical body is by no means a matter of chance. Nor is this brought about by blind natural force. Behind it is the universal law of cause and effect in the form of the law of karma. Just as the livingness of each fruit on a tree is dependent on the livingness of the tree, so is the livingness of the sperm dependent on the livingness of the male body, and the livingness of the ovum dependent on the livingness of the female body. Neither the sperm nor the ovum can be counted as an individual in the sense in which the fertilized egg is.

According to the Upaniṣads, it is the male parent that sows the seed of the offspring in the soil of the female parent. It is said in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*:

> 'Woman indeed is the fire, O Gautama. Into this fire the gods (presiding deities of the organs) offer the libation of semen. Out of this offering arises the foetus.' [32]

So says the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*:

> 'Reaching the earth [while coming down from the celestial sphere] they [the souls of those who perform sacrificial rites and righteous deeds in order to go to higher regions for sense-fulfilment][33] become food [being associated with rice, barley, etc.]. Then they are again offered in the fire of man, thence in the fire of woman, whence they are born (and perform rites) with a view to going to other worlds. Thus do they rotate [until they gain the saving knowledge, which frees them from the cycle of repeated birth and rebirth].' [34]

Here the father is said to be the procreator. In this respect the Vedantic view is akin to that of the modern 'spermists'. The 'ovists' hold a contrary view with regard to fertilization. As observed by Dr. Sturtevant:

> 'With the development of clearer ideas about fertilization two schools emerged: the "ovists" who thought the preformed parts were contained in the unfertilized egg and were merely activated by the sperm, and the "spermists" who thought

[32] V. viii. 2.

[33] They are reborn on the human plane when the merits of their deeds are exhausted.

[34] VI. ii. 16,

of the sperm as a complete animalcule that was merely nourished by the egg.' [35]

In the words of the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*:

'What exists in the male body as semen the transmigrating soul is at first conceived as that. This is the extract of vigour from all the limbs of the body and this the man holds within himself as the self. When he deposits this in his wife he procreates it. That is its first birth.

'It becomes one with the wife as her own limb is. Therefore it does not hurt her. She nourishes this self of his that has entered into her. The father is regarded as reborn as the son.

'Being the nourisher she has to be nourished. The wife bears the embryo. Right after its birth the father protects the child [by natal rites] at first. Protecting the child from its birth onward he thus protects himself for the continuation of the worlds. For thus alone are these worlds perpetuated. This [the coming out from the mother's womb] is one's second birth.

'He (the son) who is like the self of his (the father) is made his substitute for the performance of righteous deeds. Then the other self of his [that is, the father] having accomplished his duties and having reached his age departs. So departing hence he is reborn. That is his third birth.'

Śaṅkara comments on this:

'Is it not a fact that for the transmigrating soul the first birth is in the form of semen from the father? And his second birth has been stated to be as a son from the mother. The turn now being for stating the third birth of that very soul [which is born as the son] why is the birth of the dead father mentioned as the third?... That son, too, just like his father, entrusts his responsibility to his son (in his own turn) and then departing from here takes birth immediately after... What is stated with regard to the father is implied here with regard to the son.' [36]

The doctrine of reincarnation makes life meaningful. It explains man's present existence with reference to its past and future. If birth be the beginning of life then death must be its end. Rationally we cannot accept future life without acknowledging our existence in the past. The assumption of future life is based on the recognition of the present life as its preexistence.

Every child is born with a particular psychophysical constitution. What makes the difference? Heredity cannot logically explain the difference in the inborn aptitudes of the individuals. The doctrine of reincarnation provides the only satisfactory explanation of the inequalities of life. An individual's weal and woe, weaknesses and excellences, knowledge and ignorance, rise and fall, depend primarily on his own past thoughts and deeds. No external agency, parentage or Divine dispensation, chance or fate, is responsible for them. The doctrine rejects both heredity and predestination as the source of human life. It makes man self-reliant.

It distinguishes the real man, the changeless self, from the everchanging psychophysical adjunct and points out the cause of his bondage and the way to freedom. A clear knowledge of the interrelation of the body, the mind, and the self in human personality is the key to self-mastery. These three factors are distinct from one another, although closely associated. One does not originate from, nor can one be identified with, any of the two others.

According to biology heredity and environment are the two principal factors in the origin and development of an individual. Of

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[35] Prof. A. H. Sturtevant, California Institute of Technology; *A History of Genetics*, Harper and Row, 1965, p. 121.

[36] *Aitareya Upaniṣad* and Commentary, II. i. 1-4.

these two heredity is basic. It views the fertilized egg, the zygote, as a material unit composed of the physical particles derived from both the parents. To maintain the origin and development of man from this very source is to advocate the fundamental reality of matter. It is tantamount to saying that man's spiritual self as well as the mind originate from gross matter. Such a position is untenable. Physical processes can produce physical light but not the light of consciousness marked by self-awareness, which distinguishes spirit from matter. Man's spiritual self is not actually born nor does it die, but transmigrates for the time being under the law of karma.

STUDENT PROBLEMS AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Dr. George Jacob

It is about the spiritual orientation of education that I have something to say.

Our boys and girls are our most valuable natural resources. These boys and girls can receive formal education only for a short period. If, during this short period, we are not able to give them the requisite education, they would have missed it for all time. So what has to be done, during the period when these boys and girls are in schools and colleges, is of the utmost importance.

Scientific knowledge doubles itself in 10 years' time. These young men and women who are now college students will be in their late forties or early fifties when we enter the 21st century after thirty years. The scientific knowledge then available will be eight times what it is today. The landing of man on the moon, which we today consider to have been one of the greatest achievements of science, will then be looked upon as an elementary feat. The amount of power which these young men and women can wield in the domain of science, when they become mature leaders in their forties, will be colossal, almost unthinkable. So the crucial question is as to how these young men and women will use this power. What will be the motivation behind their quest ?

In the light of this, is it not tragic that we are unable to set before our students and teachers an ideal for which they can live and for which, if need be, they can die ?

Addressing the Delhi University Convocation in 1967, Sri Jai Prakash Narain observed that students' unrest can be attributed to our inability to provide a set of meaningful values for our youth. He said that even spiritually inclined people are not able to make their religious experience and outlook relevant for youth.

I believe that in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna we have an answer to this problem. There are two aspects of his teachings which I would like to emphasize in this connection. In the first place, as a teacher, he evolved an original method, a method not known in his time. He put himself on a level with his disciples, many of whom were very young men who flocked to him, to learn from him. He did not like to be addressed as Master or *guru*. Not that he adopted this merely as a Method ; Ramakrishna was through and through sincere and honest. So his putting himself on a level with his disciples was absolutely in consonance with his personality and outlook. He believed that true instruction consists not in inculcating any doctrine

but in communicating one's own inner self—one's inward abundance of spirituality. In fact we know that Ramakrishna communicated most when he spoke nothing. That was why he could say, 'Don't speak of love—realize it.'

As a teacher who has tried out this great concept of communication in a very limited and halting manner, I can bear testimony to the fact that this process of communication establishes a rapport between the teacher and the student. I have seen this happen again and again. Agitated students, with whom I have talked in small groups and exchanged ideas without counting the time involved, have always gone back conceding many of the points I have made. What is most needed on such occasions is the ability of the teacher to be receptive to any valuable ideas which the student is able to throw up. This will not be possible unless the teacher is prepared to put himself on a level with his students.

A second important concept emerging from the life and teachings of Ramakrishna is the separation of spirituality from ritualism and dogmatism. He said, 'Don't accept anything because I say so; test everything for yourself.'

What we need in our universities, colleges and schools today is to put God into these institutions. We are a Secular State. But that does not mean that we are an irreligious State. Our secularism means that all religions can exist side by side in this great country. What can be a more effective means to put God back into schools, colleges and universities than the personality and teaching of Ramakrishna, who separated spirituality from all ritualism and dogmatism?

Science can give us food, houses and material comforts, but it can never give a suitable answer to the unresolved problems of individual young men and young women. If these problems remain unresolved, they will result in crime, delinquency, drug addiction and even insanity. That is why crime, delinquency and drug addiction are very much on the increase in some of the most affluent countries of the world. Spiritual values alone can answer the problems of young men and young women. 'The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.' Shall we not make an all-out effort to bring to these spiritually starving boys and girls in our colleges and schools, the great message of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa?

First have something to give. He alone teaches who has something to give, for teaching is not talking, teaching is not imparting doctrines, it is communicating.... All teaching implies giving and taking, the teacher gives and the taught receives, but the one must have something to give, and the other must be open to receive.

—Swami Vivekananda
(My Master)

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF THE BERGSONIAN PHILOSOPHY

PROF. R. K. GARG

Bergson, in his student life, had an ambition to arrive at an accurate knowledge of the fundamentals of physics—matter, motion, force, energy, time, space. In the pursuit of this avowed aim, he discovered intuition and creative evolution which later changed the current of his life. It is, therefore, interesting as well as instructive to briefly study and examine them in the wide perspective of his entire philosophy.

INTUITION

Bergson defines intuition as 'instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely'.[1] His view of intuition is in fact best expressed in his article translated under the caption '*An Introduction to Metaphysics*'. In this paper, he sets out to give an adequate definition of intuition by way of differentiating between intellect and intuition. The fundamental differences between the two are as under.

(*i*) Intellectual knowledge is external whereas intuitive knowledge is internal. Intellect understands the object outwardly while intuition perceives it inwardly. Take an example of a tree. We may understand it outwardly by seeing its similarities to other trees and bringing it under the concept of tree. But it is not the real knowledge of the tree. That knowledge is indeed gained only by intuitively getting at the heart of the life of the tree.

(*ii*) Intellectual knowledge is relative while intuitive knowledge is absolute. To understand an object in the light of its similarities to other things means to know it in relation to those things. It is, as well, to understand it in relation to a particular interest, a point of view. It is, therefore, relative as against the absolute knowledge which is acquired by viewing the thing absolutely and integrally.

(*iii*) Intellectual knowledge is static and dead whereas intuitive knowledge is dynamic and living. Intellectual knowledge remains the same for ever as it is grounded in concepts. Horses may change but the concept of horse is immutable. Intellect tries to comprehend life by catching fixed laws. It must fail. Intuition being dynamic and living perceives motion and all forms of change; for time enters into their constitution. Hence, it can perceive the self, living beings beyond self, animals and other persons—whatever can be an object of 'sympathetic intelligence'.

(*iv*) Intellectual knowledge is abstract and partial whereas intuitive knowledge is concrete and organic. Any intellectual point of view is one among an indefinite number of possible intellectual points of view; and the truth that can be got from any of them is partial. In another sense the very outlining of the object is an abstraction, for the living object can only be understood as a part of life. On the other hand, all objects have some organic character, binding a manifold into a unity. This can be understood by intuition.

(*v*) Intellect analyses and intuition synthesizes. Intellect can break but cannot unite and recompose. It analyses the objects whereas intuition grasps them simply and as a unit. Intellect can dismember the organism but it cannot from the parts restore the living whole, which is the task of intuition.

In all these respects, intuition is the pre-

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[1] Henri Bergson: *Creative Evolution*, Macmillan & Co. London, 1922, p. 186.

cise counterpart of intellect. It succeeds where intellect fails. Its knowledge may, therefore, be denominated as immediate, organic, synoptic, dynamic and absolute.

Creative Evolution

Evolution, Bergson holds, is neither mechanical nor teleological. It is determined neither by the past nor by the future. He is hostile to both mechanism or determinism or fatalism and teleology or finalism or purposivism. He observes, 'A mechanistic theory is one which means to show us gradual building up of the machine under the influence of external cirmustances intervening either directly by action on the tissues or indirectly by the selection of better-adapted ones. But, whatever form this theory may take, supposing it avails at all to explain the detail of the parts, it throws no light on their correlation.'[2] While he thus rejects mechanism, he does not subscribe to finalism which finds in the world a foreordained end or *telos*. Finalism, too, in his opinion, fares no better than mechanism, since it 'likens the labour of nature to that of the workman, who also proceeds by the assemblage of parts with a view to the realisation of an idea or the imitation of a model. Mechanism here reproaches finalism with its anthropomorphic character, and rightly. But it fails to see that itself proceeds according to this method—somewhat mutilated! True, it has got rid of the end pursued or the ideal model. But it also holds that nature has worked like a human being by bringing parts together, while a mere glance at the development of an embryo shows that life goes to work in a very different way. Life does not proceed by the association and addition of elements, but by dissociation and division.'[3] He thus admits of no goal for evolution. He posits a theory of an 'open' evolution which postulates not a unidirectional evolutionary process but a multidirectional one on the analogy of a 'shell' which 'suddenly bursts into fragments, which fragments, being themselves shells, burst in their own turn into fragments destined to burst again, and so on for a time incommensurably long'.[4]

Evolution is, thus, creative and artistic. It has no definite limits and no preconceived pattern. It is like a painting of an inspired painter. As one cannot foretell what will exactly result from the brush of an inspired painter until he has completed his painting, so no one can predict the shape of things to come until *élan vital* brings an organ into existence or a new species into life.[5] *Elan vital* is supposed to bring out newer and newer creations. Bergson sometimes calls *élan vital* evolving God. But it is in fact neither mind nor God, but an impulsive urge to create. He thus seems to subscribe to cosmic vitalism.[6] Even in the evolution of religion, morality, society and art, immutability is indicative of death and mutability or dynamism is indicative of life. The example of the mystics, poets, saints and prophets reveals to us the immense depths and creative powers of life, which are crowned with innermost intuitions.[7]

The vital impetus or *élan vital* which only accounts for evolution, is by nature creative, intuitive, living, enduring, incessant and free.

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2 Ibid. p. 93-94.

3 Ibid. p. 94.

4 Ibid. p. 103.

5 *Vide History of Philosophy*: *Eastern & Western*, edited by S. Radhakrishnan, Allen and Unwin, London, 1957 ed., Vol. II, pp. 357-58.

6 Cp. D. M. Datta: *Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy*, University of Calcutta, 1st ed. 1950, pp. 255-59.

7 *Vide Edman and Schneider*: *Landmarks for Beginners in Philosophy*, New York, 1947, pp. 721-22.

We can now envisage an outline of this creative evolution. In plants, *élan vital* is in a state of torpor; it is almost completely stopped. In animals, it is manifested by instinct which is automatic. In man, it results in the use of intelligence, which creates definite limits, for it depends on concepts and symbols instead of life and intuition.

Philosophy of Change

The central or pivotal principle of Bergson's philosophy is change. For him, everything is change. Biology and psychology, he says, supply us with a series of facts, which can only be explained on the assumption that the universe is the creation and expression of a vital force or impulse whose function is to incessantly change and evolve. Hence Bergson comes to the conclusion that we ourselves are beings who endure not through change but by change. We are beings whose reality is change. There is no self which changes. To assert the existence of that which changes amounts to asserting the existence of something which, from the mere fact that it is subject to change, is not itself change. There is indeed nothing but change. Hence there is nothing in the universe which changes, just as there is nothing in the self which changes, for the simple reason that a something which changes would be something other than change, and such a something can never be discovered. There can exist nothing but incessant change.[8]

Dualism of Matter and Mind

In his *Matter and Memory,* Bergson goes on to show the relation of matter and mind. By an analysis of memory, which is 'just the intersection of mind and matter', he affirms the reality both of matter and mind. Matter is a sort of huge machine without memory; mind or consciousness is a force whose function is to pile up the past on the past, like a rolling snowball, and at every moment of time to draw on this past to organize something new; and memory is a power absolutely independent of matter. Matter seems to be irreducibly opposed to mind, because the former is static, shorn of qualities, inherently divisible and extended while the latter is fluid, qualitative, indivisible and apparently unextended. Matter is action which continuously unmakes itself and wears out, whereas mind is action which continuously creates and multiplies. Neither the matter constituting the world nor the mind utilizing this matter can be explained by itself; there is a common source of both this matter and this mind—the *élan vital.* Matter plays at once the role both of obstacle and stimulus. It causes us to feel our force and also enables us to intensify it. Mind is essentially memory and one of its essential functions is to accumulate and preserve the past.

Time and Space

The history of philosophy bears testimony to a heated debate as to what the nature of time and space is. Some thinkers take time and space for reality whereas others consider them merely forms which our mind imposes upon reality—reality itself being non-temporal and non-spatial. Bergson makes a notable contribution to this vexed problem by declaring both time and space to be, though antithetical, yet not unreal. Let us examine them separately.

The word 'time', according to Bergson, involves two different conceptions. They are what he calls (*i*) mathematical or scientific, and (*ii*) intuitional or instinctive. The former is not real time because it enters into mathematical and physical equations whereas the latter is real time because it gives us the consciousness of *élan vital.*

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8 *Vide* C.E.M. Joad: *Introduction to Modern Philosophy,* London, 1925, p. 93.

(*i*) *Mathematical or scientific time.* This time forms no part of the reality of the so-called external world of material things. It is simply a relation among material things. Science does not conceive of time as a constitutive part of material phenomena. It takes time to exist as a relation among things, because intellect asks it to conceive things as succeeding one another in time for purposes of its own. Science takes time for a form which appears to be necessary for the knowledge of reality by the intellect. Scientific time, according to Bergson, is the homogeneous assemblage of mutually external instants. It is virtually a form of space.

(*ii*) *Intuitional or instinctive time.* Bergson calls this time 'Duration'. Duration is a dynamic, constant and real flow. It is nothing but the *élan vital* itself. It is called real time as characterizing the nature of reality. Duration, in his own words, is 'the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances'.[9] It is the form which our conscious states assume when our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states. It is most removed from externality and least penetrated with externality. It is internal to mind; it is not intrinsically divisible, since its heterogeneous parts interpenetrate; it is fundamentally qualitative. Duration is indistinguishable from change; but change in duration involves succession, whereby different moments are bound together by memory in a continuous order of past, present and future. It is the locus of dynamic or free causality. In virtue of the fact that we ourselves are living beings, we belong to the stream of Duration, and, if we attend most closely to our own experiences, we can become conscious of the pulsing of Duration within us. But our attention must not be an attention of the intellect; it must rather be of an instinctive character. Intellect misses real time or pure Duration. It is direct perception or intuition alone which catches strong hold of real time or Duration.

Space is regarded as a limiting concept. It is external, i.e. alien in essence, in relation to perceiving mind. It is regarded as indefinitely divisible into homogeneous parts which are external to one another. It is in its homogeneity without quality, and consequently, it is pure quantity. Space is regarded as a theatre of change without succession: events in space arise and pass away in a continually re-created present, with no factor of continuity to bind moment with moment. Space is the locus of mathematical or scientific causality: the homogeneity of space allows events to be repeated; and the absence of qualitative succession causes the future to inhere in the present, and therefore to follow necessarily from the present. Thus Bergson holds that 'space, the characteristic of matter, arises from a dissection of the flux which is really illusory, useful, up to a certain point, in practice, but utterly misleading in theory'.[10] Space, it is worth noticing, is the field of intellect.

Morality and Religion

Bergson expounds his theory of morality and religion with piercing intuition in his book *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion.* His theory of morality and religion like his epistemology and metaphysics does not escape the foundational dualism of intellect and intuition. He speaks of two types of morality: obligatory and creative. The former is founded on obligations emerging from the structure of society and the forces which the elements of society

[9] *Vide* Henri Bergson: *Time and Free Will,* translated by F. Pogson, 1910.

[10] Bertrand Russell: *History of Western Philosophy,* Allen and Unwin, London, 1947, p. 823.

exert on one another. The latter—creative morality—is the expression of man's moral genius and insight. Bergson observes, 'Between the first morality and the second lies the whole distance between repose and movement.'[11] Bergson, remember, does not believe in static morality because he rejects the *apriori* character of moral laws which, he maintains, are subject to change.

Even in religion, as in morality, he distinguishes two well-defined trends which characterize the faiths of mankind. The first, which he calls conservative or static religion, is grounded in and the product of tradition and the myth-making activities of the human mind.[12] It represents the attitude of the masses who want definite and well-defined explanations and a categorical faith. The second, which he designates as mystical or dynamic religion, is wedded to genuine mystical intuition. It represents the viewpoint of the great mystics and saints who championed real freedom and had a direct vision of reality.

We may well close this account of the Bergsonian philosophy with these words of Arthur Bernotson: 'Bergson is a direct realist in epistemology, with concessions to dualism in his view of invented appearance; a dualist in ontology, with hints of a monism favouring mind; a temporalist and particularist; an evolutionary vitalist in biology, who does not quite accept teleology; a mystic in theology; and a libertarian in his view of duration, memory, the evolutionary process and personality.'[13]

11 Henri Bergson: *The Two Sources of Religion and Morality*, p. 47.

12 Cp. Frank Thilly: *A History of Philosophy*, (Indian Edition), Central Book Depot, Allahabad, 1965 ed., p. 582.

13 *A History of Philosophical Systems*, edited by Ferm, 1950, p. 381.

Bergson's View of Intuition Criticized

(*i*) Bergson is mistaken in trying to exclude intellect from the knowledge of the *élan vital*. Intellect is not after all a separate organ of the mind. Both intuition and intellect are the mind in action; intuition recognizing the presence of objects, intellect defining what they are. They are verily inseparable. In everyone, the art of living rests in the togetherness of intellect and intuition.

(*ii*) Bergson painstakingly demonstrates how the material world is created out of life. In doing so, he goes beyond what intuition can supply him with, and consequently takes shelter in the camp of the intellect. This amply shows the weakness of his intuition.

(*iii*) Intuition divorced from intellect is held guilty of the following three errors by Prof. Hocking. First, it cannot define what it perceives; for a definition makes use of a concept. Secondly, it cannot communicate what it perceives; for language is made of the common coin of concepts. Thirdly, it cannot defend its truth, nor distinguish true from false interpretation, without the aid and criticism of the intellect.[14]

(*iv*) Intuition seems to be an individual affair. The intuitions of different individual minds need not be identical.

We can, thus, fairly say that neither intuition nor intellect is an indicative of wisdom. Wisdom is the compresence of togetherness of intuition and intellect.

Bergson's View of Creative Evolution Criticized

(*i*) Bergson's advocacy of a view analogous to indeterminism with regard to the evolution of the world is the advocacy of a miracle, since it denies the determination

14 *Vide* W. E. Hocking: *Types of Philosophy*, Charles Scribners' Sons, New York, 1939, p. 211.

of cosmic evolution either to the past or to the future. The admission of a continuous flux of newer and newer creations falls short of an intelligible explanation and makes life impossible to live.

(*ii*) Bergson's conception of creative evolution strikes our fancy and fascinates our heart but does not satisfy the demands of our reason.[15]

Bergson's Philosophy of Change Criticized

(*i*) Reality, for Bergson, is change or becoming without feature or individuation of any kind. It, however, receives an interruption in its flow. But there can be no interruption without something to interrupt. What, then, is the something that interrupts? It cannot be the flow, because the flow could only interrupt itself in virtue of some stoppage in itself, and the stoppage would then be the interruption for which an explanation is sought; nor can it be matter, because matter proceeds from the interruption and is not therefore the interruption which causes matter. We are driven, then, to the conclusion that the real must needs contain the seeds of division in itself; that, instead of being a featureless becoming, it is variegated and articulated, and that, instead of being pure change, it contains elements other than change which are able to interrupt the change.

(*ii*) Change without permanence or becoming without being is unmeaning. To disregard permanence and being altogether means to unnecessarily invite difficulties.

(*iii*) Bergson's principle of the *élan vital* seems quite arbitrary and unintelligible.

[15] Cp. Bertrand Russell, op. cit. p. 838: 'His (Bergson's) imaginative picture of the world, regarded as a poetic effort, is in the main not capable of either proof or disproof.'

Bergson's Theory of Time and Space Criticized

(*i*) The entire philosophpy of time as advocated by Bergson is founded throughout on the elementary confusion between the present occurrence of a recollection and the past occurrence which is recollected As soon as this confusion is realized, his philosophy of time turns out to be simply a philosophy which omits time altogether.

(*ii*) Bergson, in his *Time and Free Will,* observes that he regards the greater as essentially that which contains the less. He offers no arguments whatever, either good or bad, to prove this view. The obvious cases, such as pleasure and pain, afford him much difficulty, yet he never suspects or scrutinizes the dogma with which he sets out.

Bergson's Theory of Morality and Religion Criticized

(*i*) His refusal to accept the *a priori* character of moral laws strikes at the very root of morality. His moral philosophy mars the objectivity of morality, in the absence of which morality becomes capricious.

(*ii*) His conception of dynamic and static morality also fares no better than his metaphysics. It is a very miraculous conception.

(*iii*) His conception of religion like his moral philosophy is defective on account of its dualism. It mars the very spirit of religion, by differentiating between the religion of the masses and the religion of the classes. It is a very queer view of religion.

(*iv*) He refuses to accept a philosophy of religion. To deny it means to abound in abstractionism.

(*v*) In short, his theory of morality and religion is subject to all those follies which we have discovered in his antithesis of intellect and intuition.

Thus we find that Bergson fails at every

count to give us an intelligible philosophy. This failure of his is of his own making, because he tries to understand everything by one single principle—*élan vital*. This fact must not, however, be overstressed, lest we overlook the unprecedented service he rendered in the fields of biology and physiology.

IN PRAISE OF ANONYMITY

NOTES ON SACRED AND SECULAR ART

PHILIP STAPP

'It is not the function of a museum or of any educator to flatter and amuse the public. If the exhibition of works of art, like the reading of books, is to have a cultural value, i.e. if it is to nourish and make the best part of us grow, as plants are nourished and grow in suitable soils, it is to the understanding and not to fine feelings that an appeal must be made. In one respect the public is right; it always wants to know what a work of art is "about". "About what", as Plato asked, "does the sophist make us so eloquent?" Let us tell them what these works of art are about and not merely tell them things about these works of art. Let us tell them the painful truth, that most of these works of art are about God, whom we never mention in polite society.'

—A. K. Coomaraswamy
in *Why Exhibit Works of Art?*

Scholars tell us that the history of our race spans about six thousand years, but that it took some six hundred thousand years, before history began, for man to become aware of his own humanity. Who knows in what manner this gradual self-awareness may have evolved? Perhaps our earliest ancestors may have sensed the inherent power in images which reflected their own likeness; footprints on a sandy beach or the imprint of a hand in soft earth. Perhaps in making these images they may have felt the first faint intuition of the joy in imitating the divine act of creation. On one cave wall at Gargas, in the Pyrenees, there are imprints of hundreds of hands made some thirty thousand years ago. These markings suggest the deep sense of awe felt by prehistoric man in the presence of symbols which reflect his newly acquired self-awareness. The images of animals and shamans he painted in caves were sacred to him. Even from this early date there seems to have been a realization of the potent force of the 'graven' image, a force greater than the material substance of the object depicted, a power which, like the energy in the atom, is invisible to the naked eye.

In the first great civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt most images, whether cut in stone, inscribed in tombs, or painted on temple walls, were believed to be messages addressed to the supernatural. Early Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, evolving from pictographs, was chiefly concerned with matters of life after death. The Jews, early Buddhists, early Christians and Mohammedans all feared the power of the graven image. They considered any representation of God dangerously blasphemous. The peoples of India, from Vedic times, accepted the paradox of God both with and without form.

As time passed, however, and the num-

ber of images proliferated, the sacred image came to be paralleled by the secular. Images were made not only to address the supernatural, but to record dramatic events and to keep accounts. Still later the sensuous quality of the image became all important. Its appeal lay in its texture, shape and colour. It became an aesthetic artifact. Until the time of the Industrial Revolution all works of art were made by hand, and therefore had, at least, the value of being unique. Today, in our age of machines which reproduce with obscene rapidity, we are inundated with a plethora of images, not only in newspapers, magazines, the cinema, television, commercial advertisements, but in art galleries and museums. The symbol is devalued, cheapened by mechanical repetition, made banal by the very commercial sponsorship it is called upon to celebrate. We have come a long way from the time when the holy image was made to lift us, through innocent wonder, to contemplation of the supernatural.

There are people today who consider the use of holy images superstitious, and those who worship 'statues' ignorant. Everyone familiar with the life of Swami Vivekananda knows the story of how skillfully he shattered the complacent condescension of certain scoffers who asserted that an image is nothing more or less than the physical material from which it is fashioned. The scene was the palace of a Maharaja : the time the last century. Swami Vivekananda asked that a portrait of the Maharaja be brought forth. He then asked the scoffers to spit on it. Needless to say there was no spitting. Similarly there is considerable scepticism today about the efficacy of the repetition of a sacred sound symbol, a *mantra,* by westerners who are bombarded daily, both visually and orally, with commercial 'brand names' from television sponsors who hope to influence potential buyers. The flags of all countries, encrusted with emotionally laden devices, have led thousands to death in time of war. There is no doubt that the inherent power of the symbol is still intact, although it is used more often for secular or political than for sacred purposes.

Today, for the first time in history, through photographic reproductions, we have access to the visual images of all times and all places. Scholars can now study, compare, analyse and catalogue all the works of art which have reflected the beliefs, hopes, fears, rituals and myths of every culture, both great and small. André Malraux calls this condition the 'Museum Without Walls'. Not many scholars have made reference to the dichotomy existing in this history of art between works made for the glory of God and those made for the inflation of the personal ego of the artist, or of his patron. Nor have many scholars concerned themselves much with the implications of sacred or profane art to the spiritual health of a given society. Ananda Coomaraswamy, late curator of oriental art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, is an exception. In his writings he has called attention to the similarity between the spirit which has animated certain forms of sacred art in India and Christian art in medieval Europe. He points out that the purity of vision in these two superficially dissimilar cultures seems to stem from the same Source.

If we look into the vast panorama of the Museum Without Walls we can see that God has worn the masks of hundreds of different cultures, disguising Himself, or Herself, in an infinite variety of shapes and forms. S. Giedion suggests that prehistoric cave painting shows an attitude of respect verging on adoration for the animals which paleolithic man knew he must kill. The form of Egyptian gods, half human, half animal, still implies this affinity. Secular

art may have crept into the first great civilizations when kingship ceased to be considered a divine responsibility, and kings became attached to the power they held as individuals. Symbols then came to be used to define personal posession of worldly goods, to mark boundaries of the concept of 'me and mine'. As time went on sacred and secular art seem to have existed side by side. The balance, however, was never equal. There have been historic periods which have left us predominantly sacred images, other periods which have left us profane ones. It is safe to say that when sacred art declined there was a comparable decline of ethical and moral standards. In periods when profane art becomes totally dominant there is an ominous sense of imminent chaos and disintegration. The art of any period registers the spiritual health or sickness of its culture.

Also, in the Museum Without Walls we can trace the metamorphosis from sacred to profane through the gradual transformation of representations of the human body. God appears in some cultures in compassionate guises and in some with terrifying aspect. From the Mesopotamian civilization the 'goddess of Tel Asmar' stands, her diminutive hands clasped with reverence, her enormous black eyes staring hypnotically as though trying with all her being to penetrate the infinite. In Egypt, King Sesostris I, in a stone relief, stands embracing the god Ptah, a mirror image, noses almost touching, so that the king and god become one, protected and protecting. The Buddha sits alone, in innumerable stone images, indrawn, serene, contemplative. Kālī makes at the same time the gesture of compassion and destruction. Śiva dances, in bronze, drunken with divine ecstasy.

Then, in the stone sculpture of Greece we can watch the gods become human. The archaic frontality of the Greek god in human configuration is gradually relaxed into a twisting, flowing representation of physical action. Sculptors search for their ideal models in gymnasia. Gods have become athletes. In the fifth century Greek sculpture achieves a peak of human elegance. An archetype is established in the mind of western man which was to reappear in the Renaissance and persist into our own century.

Then, finally, as Roman *mores* absorbed Greek customs, the human body become personal and sensual. Explicit portraits of wealthy patrons became fashionable. An age of vulgarity had arrived. In the Lateran Museum in Rome there are mosaics in which careful craftsmanship had been employed to trick the eye into believing there were scraps of food on the dining room floor, little bits of flotsam and jetsam. Profane art had become inane art.

After the disintegration of the Roman Empire, and the passing of the so-called Dark Ages, another period of sacred art was to arise in monasteries and romanesque churches. Christian scriptures, with accompanying myths and allegories, were to be cut in stone and painted in frescoes by anonymous artists. These painters and sculptors seem to have been refreshed by the long sleep of the Dark Ages, and to have regained, for a moment in history, a vision of almost childlike purity and innocence. In the tympanum of the Abbey of Moissac, in France, Christ sits in serene impersonal majesty, His face a mask of spiritual power, the angels, worshippers and adoring animals surrounding Him are arched in ecstasy. In the small 'primitive' paintings of the Sienese painter Sassetta saints move about in a landscape where hills, trees, birds and flowers, in fact all the details of nature, are distilled and transfixed as in a holy dream. This is a visionary world. The golden space of Greek and Byzantine art seems boundless. There is no 'vanishing point' on the horizon because

the confining horizon is non-existent. Every detail in such sacred works as these is wrought with love, not self-love, not only love of the elements of the painting, but a love explicitly defining the Unity of the world envisioned.

Then, in Italy, came the 'Renaissance', the very word arrogantly implying that what had preceded it was dead. During this period the Mother of God became, in works of art, just any specific woman. The saints, in paintings, came to resemble their all too human models. Leonardo da Vinci began the study of the mechanical properties of nature and our age of science was born. With the Renaissance the personality of the individual artist began to be adored. Michelangelo, a tortured religious man, was nicknamed 'The Divine'. Scientific disciplines brought into fashion a mode of perspective rendering in which all objects, modelled in worldly light and shade, were made to increase the illusion of solidarity. Contact with the mystical landscape disappeared. All stress was on the superficial appearance, the skin. In this process of making people and objects 'realistic' painters began to caress the physical. Patrons of altar-pieces were replaced by wealthy merchants who wanted 'status symbols' which artists provided abundantly: paintings of shiny brass candlesticks, mirrors, still-lifes of great piles of food, dead animals killed in the sport of the hunt.

Later, the French Impressionists began to delight in the shimmering play of light and colour in nature, and finally, 'modern art' exploded into a thousand eclectic facets. The cube, Cezanne instructed, is the basic form we must search for. The house, Courbusier remarked, is a machine for living. Again art is debased. Picasso fears to sign a postcard lest his signature be sold for a high price. Paintings are bought by clients (not patrons) in the manner of stocks and bonds, for speculation. Today, in museums, images of God are displayed as 'objects of art'. Icons, made originally to be a focal point for concentration on the Divine, are judged by the shifting aesthetic and commercial standards of our time.

Why were there times when sacred art thrived and others when sensual art became predominant ? For an answer perhaps we should search, not only in the cultural attitudes of a given society, but in the lives of the image-makers themselves. In periods when sacred art flourished the artist was usually anonymous. Gislebertus, sculptor of the superb tympanun of the Abbey of Autun, carved the phrase GISELBERTUS HOC FACIT, but this signature, like the devotional sculpture he made, was characterized by a modesty verging on the naïve. There was nothing egocentric in this unobtrusive identification, nothing hinting that he sought personal fame. The anonymity of sacred image-makers, however, hides any knowledge of their lives from us.

Should we ask instead: What is it that gives spiritual authority to a sacred image? We know that the authority of the scriptures lies in the fact that holy men lived what they preached. Christ, Buddha, Kṛṣṇa, Ramakrishna were not only aware of their humanity, they were aware of their own divinity. Their ideas were recorded with words ; there are scarcely any records of their having made any graphic images. The New Testament describes how Christ drew some symbols on the ground with a stick before speaking to the hostile crowd which was about to stone the woman taken in adultery. What he drew is not recorded. As a child Ramakrishna is said to have fashioned images of certain Hindu gods. There is no record of his having continued to make images at Dakshineswar, although he often sang and danced. The importance to him of the temple image Kālī is referred to continually in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.* There is also

the story of how, on seeing a young English boy 'bent in three places' (the classic posture of Kṛṣṇa) he was sparked into one of his sudden flights of divine ecstasy.

But what of lesser creative spirits, artists and musicians who were not aware of their own divinity, but who approached their work in a spirit of sincere devotion? It is said of Fra Angelico that he painted on his knees. Bach, who led a simple life, composed both sacred and secular masterpieces. The great Mass in C Minor could hardly have been conceived by a man who was not in close touch with the meaning of the Passion of Christ. To listen to the C Minor Mass for the aesthetic pleasure of the music alone is a kind of blind sacrilege. The visual world of William Blake and the paintings of El Greco seem to reveal a fusion of spirit and matter. Many so called 'pagan' gods, from Mexico and the Pacific islands, are fashioned with spiritual enthusiasm. It has long been the tradition for oriental artists and craftsmen to purify their minds before presuming to begin a work of art, believing that only if they can eliminate their own personal desires, anxieties, ambitions, wish for fame and money, then, and only then, can they discover the spirit which animates and gives life to the form they are about to invent.

Finally, we can look into the Museum Without Walls through the eyes of the Vedanta. We are taught that for holy men the sacred image is a focal point for concentration on the Divine, a starting point toward a higher state of consciousness. All human image-makers are crude amateurs compared to the Divine Intelligence which has designed our universe, from the nucleus of the atom to the most distant galaxy. But in our limited human vision we can, if we try, see the perfection in the most unobtrusive blade of grass, the incredible subtlety of the human face, the power in a flash of lightning and the hint of peace in the serene unclouded sky. All these are allegorical images. The Vedanta tells us that all matter is in the realm of Māyā, illusive, transient and insubstantial. Modern physicists tell us more or less the same thing: matter is energy. They say it can be measured by the laws of physics, but the deeper they go into the nucleus of the atom and the further into the vastness of outer space the more elusive their search seems to become. And yet all of us can be easily aware that all physical phenomena are subject to continual flux; birth, growth, decline, death and rebirth. This endless change implies the unalterable Divine Ground. In the state of Māyā invisible rhythms are operative which give variety to the changing phenomena. As the *Gītā* states: God is in everything, everywhere, not only in the forms but in the interstices of the forms, and yet God is not limited by form. He is immanent and yet transcendent.

In the definition of nature as a state of Māyā all our experiences are like a powerful, realistic dream. There is a story of a child who had gone blind. She kept repeating, 'Mother, mother, I can't wake up!' Vedanta tells us we are like this child, and yet are given hope by those whose eyes have been opened to see what lies beyond the condition of Māyā. The making of images, then, all art, is like a reflection of a reflection, a searching for the Spirit hidden in the form, a peering through a glass darkly.

The act of seeing, however, we are taught in the scriptures, is of the utmost importance; not the act of seeing in the physical optical sense, but the ability to see with the vision described by holy men. Swami Vivekananda, on the first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna, asked, 'Have you *seen* God?'

'Clearer than I *see* you,' Ramakrishna answered.

Christ said that those who attain purity of heart will have the ultimate ecstasy: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall *see* God.'

Perhaps the best clue to the potency of the truly sacred image is that it has always been made, and always will be made, in no matter what culture, in no matter what shape, according to the famous recipe of Śrī Caitanya:

'Oh, my mind,
Be humbler than a blade of grass,
Be patient and forbearing like a tree.
Give honour to all.
Take no honour to thyself.
Chant the name of the Lord
unceasingly.'

A TRAVELLER LOOKS AT THE WORLD—II

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

Question: As you were saying, you addressed quite a number of student audiences in America. What are their main problems as revealed by their questions?

Answer: Their main problem at present is to understand whether man has any dimensions over and above the physical or organic. The whole of western thought emphasizes this organic limitations of man, whereas our spiritual thought emphasizes man's transcendance of organic limitations. According to us, man is essentially spiritual, man is essentially divine. Now this is the thought that appeals to them. Since they want to understand what it is, many questions related to this idea of Vedanta—this idea of man's essential divinity. Many things follow from that one idea. All ethical life, all spiritual life, all life above the physical dimension, is based upon the principle that man is essentially divine, is essentially a spiritual reality. So, many questions came on this subject.

Secondly, there is one disease spreading in American society, especially among the youth, and that is drug addiction—taking all sorts of narcotics, L.S.D., marijuana, even heroin, and many other things. It is spreading from senior to junior students, and is prevalent even among high school students today. So, in many places, this was a prominent subject for questions and discussion. One such experience I particularly remember at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, because it was very very striking—and that was my last lecture. In the coffee-house of the university we had quite a big gathering. It began in an informal way, but as soon as the discussion started the whole atmosphere changed; everyone became involved. People wandering here and there came and stood, and as the discussions proceeded they became very serious. It was an important experience for all the participants.

There the question came up: the place of drugs in human life and particularly in religious life. 'Most of the students take drugs. What have you to say to this, Swami?'—that was the question. Then I had to say very seriously that it is highly harmful for the human body and mind. Taking drugs has no reference to man's spiritual life at all. It may give some psychic state; but spirituality cannot be purchased by paying a dollar for a drug. Spirituality is a complete transformation of human character; so that our youths in

America should beware of the evils of this drug habit. In three generations they will be unfit to hold the reins of this great civilization of today. That is how I warned American youth and they seemed to take it very seriously.

They said : 'Why not drugs ? We in America say we have discovered a new way to man's spiritual growth, which ancient teachers never knew.' I said, 'That may be the American religion, but I don't accept it—we know its effects on man's body and mind. It spoils your body and mind. It makes you comatose. It makes you sleepy. It may give you some experience, something above the organic level ; but that is just the slightest glimpse of what is above the material condition of life. Don't depend upon it all the time. There may have been exceptional individuals who got some experience like this and then, perhaps, left off the drugs and started religion in right earnest ; but we should not depend upon that. Very often we shall be tied down to that level and become a slave to the drug habit, destroying our brain and body.'

So the students became quite serious that day and some of them asked, 'What shall we do ?' Others said, 'Let us start a Vedanta Society in Pittsburgh ; it will be helpful to our students.' One student purchased a set of our Vedantic books saying, 'I want to start a library. Let the ideas reach other students.'

I could see the serious response of the students, when the matter was put like this. In Vedanta we do not say 'don't do this' and 'don't do that', simply because that thing is banned by some religion. We are not killjoys. If it is beneficial, we will certainly say 'yes', and if it is harmful, we will certainly say 'no'. The sensitive constitution of young people will be harmed once and for all by these drugs. This is why we of Vedanta are concerned about the spread of this drug habit among the younger generation. It may not be so harmful to the older people, but to the young it is extremely harmful.

Question : From your experience of these university and college meetings, what would you say are the significant differences between youth problems in India and in America ?

Answer : One major difference is this, that our problems arise from our underdeveloped state, from our economically and socially underdeveloped state. Our problems are of getting jobs, opportunities and so forth. There is not money enough to spend even for a very modest living ; whereas in America it is different. There the problems arise from the excess of material goods. In fact, in America today, there is a reaction against what you may call the 'affluent society' concept. Many of the young people are highly sensitive. Their idealism makes them resist this concept of America's being an affluent society. So very rich students, boys and girls, will come to the university very ordinarily dressed. They do not want to be told they are children of rich parents. It is a protest against the present social conditions. Wealth can create more problems for man, more serious ones sometimes, than poverty. That is what I saw in the American situation today. Thousands of years of poverty did not destroy the spirit of man ; whereas a hundred years of wealth may do so. This is something writ large in modern experience.

In India industrial development, economic opportunities, and this kind of thing can save us from difficulties—though even in India we have problems, because in our education the aim of life is not very clearly expressed in terms of our own philosophy. Ours is still only a bread-winning education. And being merely bread winning, it chokes some of the higher springs of human life. So in our behaviour we become aimless.

We just go along, not knowing where we go. If there is a person who is aimless, without a direction, and if he is full of energy, he expresses that energy in destructive ways. Much of this behaviour of youth in India is because of this aimlessness, this purposelessness, which is already coming over the higher social groups. It is because no higher purpose has been shown to them. In India, by and large, we have enough philosophical and spiritual guidance to help us. If these ideas are widely scattered among the people we can overcome the weaknesses and achieve more economic development too. Then we shall catch up in the march towards human betterment, not only in economic terms but also in ethical and spiritual terms. We can overcome these problems because we have the remedy and not the disease only. India is fortunate in having the remedy along with the disease.

That remedy is there in our philosophy and thought. But as it is often presented, it is not capable of catching the minds of young people. We have to present it in a rational and scientific way, not authoritatively. What I have seen myself in India is that when we address students in terms of the philosophical, rational content of our heritage, they immediately respond—but not through 'do's' and 'don'ts'. Today's young people will never respond to 'do's' and 'don'ts'. Anti-authoritarianism is the characteristic feature of all youth movements in both East and West today. Yes, we have a philosophy which is not based on authority, but on sheer rational conviction. How to put it across to the young people? That is our problem in India. We have the food : we have to give it to the people. In other places, you have to find the food itself. This higher kind of food is for the spiritual nourishment of the human personality.

Question : Do the youth agitations in America represent more a frustration or a new awakening ?

Answer : It is primarily a frustration and slightly an awakening. Frustration is writ large. A new materially-advanced society really destroys certain aspects of the human personality. There is a weariness coming upon individuals and nations, which Swami Vivekananda warned against seventy-five years ago. The history of the world teaches us that a world-weariness becomes evident in certain periods. Some such experience is that of western civilization today. You find it very much in post-war United States—world-weariness. What is all this for ? All this wealth, this power, and all this technical development—what is it all for ? Even the students at Harvard University, when they gave a charter of demands, expressed this sentiment. They do not want this defence industry. They do not want this higher technology. What is it all for ? Where is the spirit of man going ?

So there is a fundamental search for the deeper meaning and significance of life. But unfortunately there is no philosophy available which can canalize these idealistic trends in constructive directions. That's why, in America, we have the 'drop-outs'. It is a contemporary term. They do not believe in or belong to society ; they are called drop-outs. Many young men and women are drop-outs. They do not feel happy in their society. But what do they drop-out into ? Simply aimless wandering—'hippies' they are called. They do not belong to American society. But where do they belong ? They do not know ; so they become a problem to society, a problem to themselves. Some turn to crime, some to drugs, some to political action, violent action. A few find their way to some higher spiritual idea. This is a problem of western society in general and of American society in particular.

At several meetings I had to say, India

has studied the drop-out problem and provided for it. Some of the greatest men of Indian history were drop-outs. Buddha was a drop-out, I said. That was a surprise to them. He did not like society. What did he do? He had a constructive channel to express the drop-out idea. He became the pioneer of a tremendous renaissance in India. These drop-outs were, many of them, creative personalities.

What is wanted is a channel to canalize the energies of the drop-outs. I myself am a drop-out: I said so in several lectures. From the social point of view, I am a drop-out. But I have a concern for society; I have a channel through which I can express my drop-out mentality and make it truly constructive. This the American tradition does not provide. It is a new experience for Americans. But I am sure, with the help of other civilizations, America will find a way of expressing these great new forces through constructive channels. So we discussed the problem intimately, and the students were deeply interested in such discussions. After an hour's lecture there would be a three-hour discussion sometimes. Great interest is there. These are new ideas to them.

Question: Is American civilization really going downhill? If so, what can bring about its new birth in glory? What role can Vedanta play in this regard?

Answer: There are intellectuals in America who are dissatisfied with American civilization as it is. Even political leaders, including President Nixon, sometimes refer to American society as a sick society. It *is* sick. Some sickness is there; otherwise, how do you explain the crime, the sex mania, and so forth, and the general discontent of society? Youth revolts—so many things are there. These are symptoms of some malady. The problem is to understand that malady and find a remedy. We need to deepen the whole concept of human excellence which we have in modern civilization: that is the root of the matter. These symptoms are merely the fruits. What is man? What is he in his essence? If that is not rightly understood, no good is going to come. By mere patchwork here and there you are not going to solve the problem.

It is here, as a profound philosophy, rational and scientific, that Vedanta is going to have a great part to play in the reshaping of modern western civilization. With many scientists and professors I sat during this tour, and discussed Vedanta and modern thought. When they come to know what Vedanta is, they sincerely bow down to it as something wonderful, something lofty.

Then I said that though we in India have discovered this profound philosophy of man, we have not made full use of it ourselves. We have yet to carry into effect certain practical applications of it. But western people have greater efficiency; they have greater energy. Swami Vivekananda himself said that probably they would make better use of this profound philosophy of man than even India. In the age in which we are living, this interchange of ideas through which cultures become cross-fertilized, will give rise to tremendous new developments. Modern western civilization is in for a great change, a great development, through contact with the soul of Indian thought, that is, with Vedanta. This is the one philosophy that commands the attention of thinking people in the modern world. This I saw everywhere, whether in Communist countries like Czechoslovakia or Cuba, or western democracies like America, England, or France—everywhere thinking people stand in reverence before the majesty of Vedanta. It is so rational, so practical; it is so universal.

I was speaking to a group of professors and students in the University of Lima, Peru, in South America. It is called San

Marcos University. It is a catholic university, the oldest university in South America. Unfortunately, due to student troubles, it had been closed since the previous February. I went there in August. I spoke about Vedanta for half-an-hour. Then a science professor asked me, 'Swami, what you said just now is so philosophical, so rational, so scientific. Do you mean to say that this philosophy was developed in India ages ago? That is something surprising.' I said, 'Yes, it was developed in India more than four thousand years ago.'

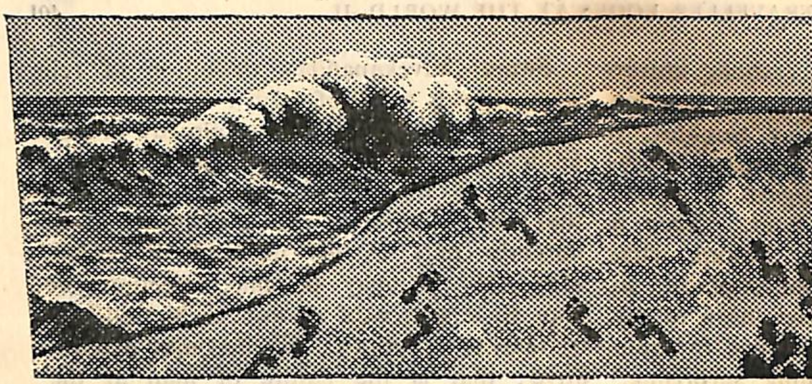
The West has yet to understand this tremendous philosophical contribution of India. This was my experience everywhere. But when they do come to know, they simply stand in reverence before it. I had many occasions to meet good scholars, professors, philosophers and scientists, and to discuss with them. Once it is explained to them, I saw that they really appreciate this profound philosophy which can stand the tests of rational scrutiny, verification and experimentation.

Swami Vivekananda's definition of religion appeals to all of them: Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man. Ethical sense, a concern for the other person, all this comes as a by-product of that manifestation of man's divinity. If he develops only in his physical dimension, sometimes he may be fine, sometimes he may be a source of tension to himself and of tension to others. He becomes exploitative; that is the nature of man at the organic or physical level. The deeper nature of man is what Vedanta preaches, through which great energies will come. By means of these the other energies developed at the organic level can be controlled and disciplined. Modern civilization needs another energy resource by which the energy released by science, technology and sociological thought can be disciplined and made creative and helpful for the fulfilment of man. Vedanta appeals to them when it is presented in the context of modern scientific thought.

(*To be continued.*)

ERRATUM

Please read 'Indiana State' in place of 'Indian State' Published in 'A Traveller Looks At The World', July 1970 issue, Page 329, Column 1, last line.



HUMAN TRENDS

FACING THE CHALLENGE OF WORLD-WIDE CULTURAL CRISIS

In the early fifties when Dr. Prem Kirpal, now the Vice-President, Executive Board, UNESCO, Paris visited the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, in an old and humble location and heard from its founder, Swami Nityaswarupananda, of the ideas and ideals embodied in the institution he said that 'the Institute was truly UNESCO in action'. Twenty years later on April 15, 1970 when he visited the Institute in its new and impressive location he had many things more to say. He prefaced his speech with an elaboration of the remark made twenty years ago: 'Today it is even more appropriate to repeat the statement, and tomorrow I hope this great Institute of Culture will set an example to international co-operation in the things of the mind and the spirit, and play a leading role in promoting everywhere that sense of universalism and spirituality which was so nobly expressed in the work and thoughts of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Today we need their message more than ever, because all nations of the world share a crisis of culture which poses a great challenge to humanity in the years to come.'

Furthermore referring to the Institute's objective of international cultural co-operation, Dr. Kripal drew attention to the enthusiastic support of many cultural leaders associated with UNESCO.

These remarks were made by him when he presided over a meeting at the Institute on the 15th of April, 1970. The text of his speech in part is given below.—Ed.

This crisis of culture in all societies partakes of the larger crisis of our contemporary civilization. I believe that this crisis is composed of three main elements in the world situation today. In the first place, we are being overwhelmed, even being eliminated as persons, by a process of fragmentation, dominated by an obsession for analysis, mechanization, and over-specialization. We see around us a continuing fragmentation of life, of Man, and of knowledge, undermining the unity of living, the identity and integration of the individual, and the wholeness of truth, which is bigger than factual data and patches of knowledge. This process leads to uncertainty, confusion, and loss of faith, and man becomes a helpless subject to his own computer. There is an urgent need for a fresh synthesis and a new vindication of the wholeness of man, of a more unified order in his inner and outer world, and of the basic and fundamental truths and values. We need a much stronger and more conscious emphasis upon synthesis and purposeful convergence towards a new humanism.

The second element in the crisis of our times is that of a terrible unreality, a widen-

ing gulf between thought and action, which is wider and more serious than the gap between material affluence and poverty. Splendid professions, majestic formulations, and powerful manifestoes from the ruling establishments are daily manufactured and magnified by the manipulation of the media of communications. The abundance of thought is matched by a pathetic paucity of action; what is more dangerous is that it is accepted, even taken for granted, that what we profess will not be practised and, what is promised is not intended to be fulfilled. In this state of unreality which verges on dishonesty and cynical hypocrisy, can we blame the youth when they protest in anger and despair?

The insufficient stress on the moral and ethical element in promoting peace and development is the third feature of the deepening crisis. The pace of development has regressed sadly, the peace of the world remains apparently fragile and threatened, the violation of human rights is greater than their loud proclamation, and violence looms larger with the increase of self-centredness, indifference, and greed. In this situation, the role of UNESCO and those who believe in its mission of understanding and appreciating different cultures and promoting cultural values is clear; UNESCO must do everything possible to create a new climate of peace and co-operation, promote meaningful dialogues that are taken seriously by those who talk and communicate, and exemplify its own faith by bold and sincere action.

These major elements of the prevailing crisis of our contemporary civilization are shared by all and confronted, even more sharply, by the affluent societies at present. Poverty and misery continue in the midst of material opulence and along with the most spectacular achievements of science and technology, and man achieves his fantastic visit to the moon, while remaining powerless to abolish slums on his own earth. The means and modes of destruction and violence multiply rapidly, threatening disaster on a global scale, while peace and disarmament remain as distant as ever. The explosion of knowledge has no counterpart in the increase of wisdom, and colossal power is not matched by even a modicum of discrimination. These paradoxes and others continue to infest life when the capacity to plan, direct, and elevate its quality is now well within the grasp of man.

The need for co-operation was never greater, and cultural co-operation now holds the key to the unfolding of a new World Order. For the first time in history, science and technology have overtaken and even surpassed the imagination and vision of man. Science fiction becomes rapidly a reality, while the vision of the poet and the seer to strengthen the bonds of love and friendship tends to vanish in thin air. Technological advances and the revolution in communications have already imposed an external unity upon the world; paradoxically, however, racial myths, national pride, and the obsessive pursuit of power and greed continue to divide mankind into warring factions and exclusive groups. We need to give a new recognition to the field of culture everywhere in the world and realize that cultural co-operation must play a leading role in the making of a world community joined together by the forces of harmony, creativity, and fraternity.

The main objective of cultural co-operation in the coming decade is to establish bridges of understanding and lines of communication between the affluent societies mainly of the West and the so-called developing societies of Asia and Africa. In achieving this objective the programme outlined by Swamiji can make a great contribution. Already his idea of establishing a *School of World Civilization* has been enthusiastically supported by many cultural

leaders associated with UNESCO and I hope the next General Conference will adopt a suitable resolution giving the approval of the World Assembly to the proposal. Such a development would give India the possibility of giving something in the world of thought, mind, and the spirit to balance our substantial receipts of material aid.

One may hope that with her precious heritage of culture, her genius for synthesis and universality of outlook, and the continuity of her great and composite civilization, India will take significant initiative in providing opportunities for sustained and continuing reflection by students and scholars of many cultures and civilizations in search of a new humanism and universal values for all mankind. Such a development will not only be of service to humanity; it will also enable India to rediscover her identity and find her soul after centuries of subjugation and decadence. I have no doubt that in spite of the prevailing poverty and misery, the people of India possess sufficient spiritual resources to attain a new quality of life for themselves and to work with others in a great co-operative venture of human solidarity. The essence of the new humanism and its crucial importance were well expressed by Bertrand Russell in the dark days of fear, suspicion, and cold war: 'Remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new paradise; if you cannot, nothing lies before you but universal death.'

DR. PREM KIRPAL

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

These questions answered by Sri Ramakrishna occur in: 'M' *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1964, pp. 79-81 and p. 113.

Awareness of our divine dimension being the ultimate solution to our bewildering problems, the Editorial 'Towards the Manifestation of the Divine' impresses upon us the importance of spiritual exercise for strengthening ourselves and reaching the goal. It also refers to the role of *Prabuddha Bharata* in this regard.

'Student Problems and Sri Ramakrishna' is the substance of a speech delivered by Dr. George Jacob, Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University. The occasion was the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna this year.

Prof. R. K. Garg, Department of Philosophy, M.M.H. Post-Graduate College, Ghaziabad, in his article presents a critical estimate of the Bergsonian philosophy.

Philip Stapp, author of 'In Praise of Anonymity', is a member of the Vedanta Society, New York. He is Artist in Residence, Ohio State University, and Associate Professor in the School of the Arts, Columbia University. He has also won distinction in the production of educational films for U.N.O., W.H.O., the U.S. Foreign Service, etc.

'A Traveller Looks at the World—II' is in continuation of our interview with Swami Ranganathananda published in the July issue.

CATHOLICISM MOVES TOWARDS CATHOLICITY

Political happenings in the world claim so much of our attention that we are sometimes apt to miss even significant happenings in other spheres of life, even though they are likely to greatly influence the future of mankind.

Under the blanket of the fast-moving affairs of the world which make news in the daily papers, a great ferment is taking place in the hearts of the world faiths. In some faiths painstaking work is going on to make this ferment relevant to the aspirations of modern man while remaining true to the fundamentals of the faith.

In the Roman Catholic Church the proneness to inner change has become manifest in a momentous movement. Since Pope John XXIII initiated the ecumenical movement for up-dating the Church, a change of mind has not only resulted from agonizing inner struggle but has even issued in a regard for other faiths.

This is a new and noble development in the Catholic Church which we heartily welcome, for it augurs well for mankind. By the Lord's grace the Church shows signs of being prepared not only to shed its former painful exclusiveness but even to see truth and greatness in other faiths of the world. This development can be better appreciated by comparing what the Church thought about another faith in the fifties with what it thinks today.

In the September 1955 number of *Vedanta Kesari*, an English organ of the Ramakrishna Order, an editorial appeared with the caption 'A Manifesto of the Roman Catholic Intentions in India'. The editorial was a constructive repudiation of what were given out as the intentions of the Catholic Church in India in a brochure[1] published with the *imprimatur* of the Archbishop of Madurai. In that brochure the writer presented the Catholic Church as the 'time-bomb' which would blow up Hinduism. And it was frankly declared:

> '...If we should reveal our intention without hiding at all, we hold that the Hindu Purāṇas and Hinduism must disappear from this land; and the sooner they disappear, the more welcome' (p. 55).

In contrast with this, when we read what Cardinal Joseph Parekkattil, Archbishop of Ernakulam, said recently, we shall readily see that the grace of the Lord has been at work in the heart of the Roman Catholic Church, for which all religions have reason to be thankful.

On Hinduism the Cardinal said:

> 'Hinduism is like "a rose-red city half as old as time". For 5000 years India has lived on a continuous tradition of religion; its beginnings can be traced back to the time of the beginning of religion in Egypt and Mesopotamia. The astonishing fact is that while the religions of Egypt and Babylon and ancient Greece have become things of the past, the ancient religion of India has undergone a continuous evolution and still remains as one of the great living faiths of mankind.
>
> 'The scriptures and other books of Hinduism contain the wisdom of the ages. They have taught the masses of India many sublime truths and given them edifying examples of virtue and whole-hearted devotion. Some of the prayers recited by the Hindus cannot leave a Christian unmoved. In Hindu asceticism and detachment, in the techniques of mental concentration found in the Yoga tradition, in the living example

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[1] Vide: *Dhiravida Iyakankalum Katholikkarum (Dravida Movements and Roman Catholics)* —Part I, by Chi. ma. Visuvasam, B.Ph., D.D., Mathurai; Thei-Nobili Press Co., Puthur, P.O., Mathurai; *Imprimatur*† J. P. Leonard, S. J., Archbishop of Madurai.

given by millions of pilgrims and *sannyāsis* who set out in quest of God, a Christian will find an ever-new affirmation of the primacy of the spirit. The Hindu theology of grace, as exposed by the great Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva *gurus*, brings Hinduism closest to Christianity in its loving reliance upon the gracious and all-powerful love of the merciful Lord. The Upaniṣads and Śaṅkara *bhāṣya* have given to India a lofty metaphysical tradition. It seems to me that Vedanta represents the deepest metaphysical and spiritual quest in the non-christian world. The age-long treasures of Hinduism can be classed among the richest heritages of mankind.

'In more recent times. Hinduism has known many movements of reform and revival, some of which perhaps have been influenced by Christianity. The 19th century in particular witnessed a resurgence of Hinduism and a dominant part in this was played by Swami Vivekananda. He spear-headed a great revivalist movement. He, however, derived his inspiration from his great master Sri Ramakrishna to whom, more than anyone else, Hinduism owes it revival in modern times. Sri Ramakrishna was untouched by Western ideas and ideologies and he was primarily a contemplative. He wrote nothing, founded no organisation and started no movement, as such. His illustrious disciple Vivekananda was not merely a contemplative. He, a staunch nationalilst, a fiery orator and a man of action, was greatly influenced by Western philosophies. The Ramakrishna Mission and the Order were the creation of of Sri Vivekananda, who tried to infuse into Vedanta a practical outlook. He has left his unmistakable stamp on the Ramakrishna Mission and inspired many to follow his noble example.'

The occasion of this speech was a reception accorded to Swami Ranganathananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, by the citizens of Cochin on the 28th December, 1969, on his return to India after completing a preaching mission in twenty-four countries lasting one year and a half. The Cardinal not only paid a handsome and full-hearted tribute to the personal merits of Swami Ranganathananda and his good work in the wide world; he gave the deep impression that his Church was genuinely concerned to be in respectful fraternal communion with the other faiths of the world.

Describing the 'spirit and bond of brotherhood' which brought him to associate himself with the civic function called to honour a Hindu monk, and thanking the civic body 'for the opportunity', the Cardinal evinced the new refreshing temper and understanding of his Church when he thoughtfully said:

'We are now facing not unintelligent irreligion but intelligent and articulate irreligion. On the one hand, rationallism and modernism are undermining theological thought in our country; on the other hand, an exaggerated faith in technology is turning the minds of a large section of the intelligentsia away from religion. The spread of literacy without adequate religious formation exposes large numbers of our young people to propagandist ideologies. The rise of a secularism with its man-centred humanism and its refusal to contemplate any reality that transcends this world, constitutes a great danger for the age-long spirituality of India.

'It is by the promptings and constraints of religion that in all ages and in all parts of the world men have tackled their deepest problems and their hardest tasks. When we say that it is the business of man to be human, we mean that in all his particular interests he should be maximizing his humanity. For, none of us is fully a man: we are all men in the making, on the way towards an ideal that is deeply set in our nature. What that ideal is has been the subject of a grand debate that has gone on through the centuries and continues still. In that debate the predominant voices that have spoken have done so

in the name of religion. We are now at a stage in history when the followers of all religions are fighting a common enemy and therefore ought not to be fighting one another. We should be prepared in fact to work together and to study the claims and teachings of religions other than one's own with openness and humility and in a spirit of true ecumenism. We should be watchful against a tolerance that is passionately intolerant and of a dogmatism that is fiercely against all dogmas. A Christian cannot be blind to the spiritual earnestness, sincerity and work of God's grace in those who profess a faith different from his own.'

This gives promise of a new Catholicism, truly catholic. It does one's heart good to note this new inward development of the ancient Church of which the Cardinal's speech has been a welcome outward expression.

In the face of this development we cannot but thankfully remember what our great leader, Swami Vivekananda, said in his concluding speech in the Parliament of Religions in Chicago on the 27th September 1893:

> 'If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: "Help and not Fight", "Assimilation and not Destruction", "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension".'

Does it not seem that we are living in days propitious for the fulfilment of this prophecy?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

POLITICAL AND NATIONAL LIFE AND AFFAIRS—(Vols. I & II): By M. K. Gandhi; Compiled and edited by V. B. Kher; Navjivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad 14, pp. lvi+208 & viii+327; 1967; Price Rs. 6/- each.

These two volumes provide the reader not only with an historical panorama of the Indian political scene during the freedom struggle but also with a perspective of the fascinating personality of Gandhiji. They comprise Gandhiji's writings in *Young India* and *Harijan* and replies to correspondents on various topics and issues. Many of the topics discussed by the Mahatma have great relevance to present times. To mention a few at random: linguistic division of India, the scramble of congressmen for positions of power, Hindu-Muslim unity, village-based administration for India, intercaste unity, eradication of corruption and hooliganism.

Now and again we get clear glimpses of Gandhiji's inspiring personality. For him any activity, politics not excepted, should subserve man's eternal quest for God. To him there was no politics without religion as 'religion is the basis on which all life structure has to be erected if life is to be real'. 'Those politics are nothing worth divorced from truth and non-violence. Truth and non-violence are synonymous with God. ...' (Vol. I, p. 80). When a campaign of civil disobedience turned violent, he wrote in *Young India* that he had to confess his inability to conduct such a campaign. 'It is a humiliating confession of my incapacity, but I know that I shall appear more pleasing to my Maker by being what I am instead of appearing to be what I am not.' (Vol. I, p. 60).

The Editor, Sri V. B. Kher, deserves our thanks for his efforts in collecting and classifying the material under suitable headings and for a valuable introduction.

S.T.

INDIA SINCE 1857 By Sudhansu Bimal Mookherji. Kitab Ghar, High Court Road, Gwalior, 1968. pp. 232, Price Rs. 15.

The book, with ten chapters, five appendices and three maps, covering the eventful period from 1857 to 1947, is an interesting study and shows considerable scholarship. Written by an experienced Professor of History who is conversant with the problems of students and the general public, the book is sure to be well received by all concerned. The best thing in the book is the author's frank and fearless statement of facts and remarks which makes the work historically very valuable.

However, the book has all the defects that is often found in Indian publications—too many spelling mistakes and the want of an Index.... If these mistakes are rectified and a proper Index is added the future editions of this otherwise very valuable work will surely remove a long-felt need. We recommend the book to students, who will find it very useful at all stages.

Dr P. N. Mukherjee

THE FLIGHT PATTERN TO ETERNITY—A THEORY OF REALITY. By Joseph Llewellyn White, The Philosophical Library, New York, 1968, pages 120, Price $4.00.

Ever since man became self-conscious and reflective, there was the never-ending quest into the mystery of life and the riddle of the universe. Man seeks a rational explanation of life, a theory of Reality. Mr. White seeks to prove in this book that 'all that is, is real'. Existence is identified with Reality. This Reality consists of stages and phases which are 'governed by a primordial and dialectical pattern'. The pattern has a triad of phases. There is a consistent and underlying pattern which prevails throughout the universe. In outlining this, the author also presents a metaphysical framework while determining the goals of the different wholes of Reality.

The method is largely eclectic, and the work brings back metaphysics to a philosophical enquiry. It repays a close reading.

Dr. P. S. Sastri

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, VISAKHAPATNAM

Report for 1968-69

The activities of this Centre during the period under review were as follows:

Religious Service: Daily worship was conducted in the Ashrama shrine in which the public took part. On *ekādāśi* days Rāmanāma *Saṅkīrtanam* was sung in the evenings, in which a large number of devotees joined. The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Buddha, Śaṅkarācārya and others were celebrated in a fitting manner.

Cultural Work: In the Cultural centre the public, especially the children, were taught Sanskrit on easy lines. Film shows were arranged to impart audio-visual education. A Children's Library containing mostly illustrated books was made good use of.

Discourses on *Bhāratam, Rāmāyaṇam* and *Bhāgavatam* were conducted in the evenings at the Vivekananda Hall and attended by a large number of public.

Free Reading Room and Library: There are 2,345 books in the Library. 20 magazines and 6 newspapers were received in the Free Reading Room.

Sri Sarada Bala Vihara: A Primary School with English medium was started in 1958. During the year under review there were 324 children on the roll. The novel methods of instruction given and the attention paid to children have won the appreciation of their parents.

Free Homoeopathic Dispensary: This dispensary was started to cater to the needs of the suffering poor of the locality. It is being serviced by the Homoeopathic Sevak Samaj.

Immediate Needs: Additional storey for school building; Equipment, books and journals for the Library and Reading Room; Equipment, illustrated books for children's library; Repair of buildings.


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RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA
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	Price
* Life of Sri Ramakrishna Foreword by Mahatma Gandhi Board :	8·00
Cloth :	10·00
* The Life of Ramakrishna By Romain Rolland	5·50
* A Short Life of Sri Ramakrishna	1·25
Sri Ramakrishna And His Mission—By Swami Ramakrishnananda	0·62
* Sri Ramakrishna And Swami Vivekananda—By Jawaharlal Nehru	0·50
* Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna	5·00
Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna	5·00
* My Master—By Swami Vivekananda	0·70
* The Message of Ramakrishna	0·30
* Ramakrishna And His Disciples—By Christopher Isherwood	12·50
Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master	25·00
The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna	25·00
Ramakrishna Upanishad By C. Rajagopalachari	1·00
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* At Holy Mother's Feet—By Lila Majumdar and Swami Gambhirananda	5·00
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WORKS ON AND OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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* The Life of Swami Vivekananda—By His Eastern & Western Disciples Board :	12·00
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* The Life of Vivekananda And The Universal Gospel—By Romain Rolland	6·00
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Notes of Some Wanderings with Swami Vivekananda By Sister Nivedita	2·00
* A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda	1·25
Swami Vivekananda And His Message—By Swami Tejasananda	5·00
* What Religion Is : In The Words Of Swami Vivekananda	12·00
* The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda (In Eight Volumes) Per Vol. Board :	7·00
Cloth :	10·00
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